University of Alberta

Fabric-ating Meaning: Quilting as Knowing

by

Peggy Barbara Boss Mann

©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

in

Clothing and Textiles

Department of Human Ecology

Edmonton, Alberta

Fall 2002

National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Acquisitions et
services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-81296-0

Canada

University of Alberta

Library Release Form

Name of Author: Peggy Barbara Boss Mann

Title of Thesis: Fabric-ating Meaning: Quilting as Knowing

Degree: Master of Arts

Year this Degree Granted: 2002

Permission is hereby granted to the University of Alberta Library to reproduce single copies of this thesis and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly, or scientific research purposes only.

The author reserves all other publications and other rights in association with the copyright in the thesis, and except as hereinbefore provided, neither the thesis nor any substantial portion thereof may be printed or otherwise reproduced in any material form whatever without the author's prior written permission.

Peggy Mann

182, 52246, Range Road 232,
Sherwood Park, AB.
T8B 1C1

September 17, 2002
Date

University of Alberta

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled Fabricating Meaning: Quilting as Knowing by Peggy Barbara Boss Mann in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts in Clothing and Textiles.

Anne M Lambert

Professor M. Anne Lambert

Elizabeth Richards

Dr. Elizabeth Richards

Joe Norris

Dr. Joe Norris

May 27, 2002

Date of approval

Analysis is threaded throughout the thesis, and represents the quilt stitching that holds all layers together.

Quilting is an epistemology; it is embedded with, and stimulates, women's archetypal knowledge. A form of creative inquiry and representation, quilting is woman-centered, challenging, contemplative, and empowering. Quilting enhances dialogue and the ability to make meaning by merging emotion and intellect. Quilters in this study reflected on personal meaning, solved problems, built and maintained psychosocial connections, and improved their own sense of well being and quality of life.

This is dedicated to my loving family:

Heather Peggy Mann,

Daryl Jay Mann,

Graham Peter Mann

and

my husband Jay Stanley Mann

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the people who contributed to this thesis. Some have been directly involved with the creation and completion of my work, while others have supported me with their encouragement, patience and friendship. My sincere thanks go to all those who had direct or indirect involvement with my research project. I appreciate everyone's commitment and care. I could not have done it without you.

In particular I thank my supervisor, Professor Anne Lambert for her dedication to this project. Your encouragement and support were critical throughout the process. I appreciate the safe environment you provided while I pursued my dream. Thank you.

I also wish to recognize my committee members, Dr. Elizabeth Richards and Dr. Joe Norris. Thank you, Elizabeth, for delaying retirement to work with me. Your knowledge of textiles and love of quilting added depth to my research. Joe, I appreciate your insight and contribution to my study. Your knowledge of arts-based research provided inspiration and broadened my understanding of how humans make meaning.

I am very grateful to members of the bee, who opened their homes, hearts and minds. Thank you to Ellen, Faye, Gail, Sharon H., and Sharon R. for your insights, wisdom and creativity. Your quilting makes the world a more beautiful place.

Thank you also to Marnie Rutherford, who made time in her busy schedule to operate the video camera. I wish to thank the techno-wizards: Jay Mann, Errol Billing, Joseph Mann and Ken Schmidt who shared their computer expertise and demystified audiovisual equipment. To the faculty, staff and students in the Department of Human Ecology, thank you for your assistance, support, and guidance.

Thank you to Audrey Howery, Shirley Elliott, and Tami Shaw for laughter-filled Friday nights and to Rita Spain, Robin Mountford, and Lynn Deck for your enduring friendship. Your stories helped me understand the importance of women's daily experiences. I deeply value our friendships.

To my in-laws, Dennis and Laura Mann, thank you for all your help over the years. Your quilting, needlework, and persistence have been an inspiration.

To my sister Dianne Boss Surine and my brother Allan Boss and their families, thank you for your love, support and encouragement. When I thought I could not reach any deeper, you knew just how to draw out even more. Thank you for providing me with courage.

I offer a heartfelt thank you to my parents Elvira and George Boss who recognized that I was always a "reader". Growing up I heard your words, "Get an education", which helped develop my life-long desire to learn. Your own hard work provided an excellent example of the tenacity required to meet personal goals. Thank you for providing a solid, loving foundation.

Finally, my most sincere thanks to my amazing family: Jay, Heather, Daryl and Graham. I could not have completed this degree without your absolute love and support. This was without a doubt, a family endeavor; I appreciate how you stood by me. Thank you for your encouragement, patience and understanding. I am truly blessed to have you in my life.

Abstract

Quilting has influenced economic, social, psychological and emotional aspects of society. The activity is very popular worldwide and interest continues to grow. This is an arts-based study about quilting.

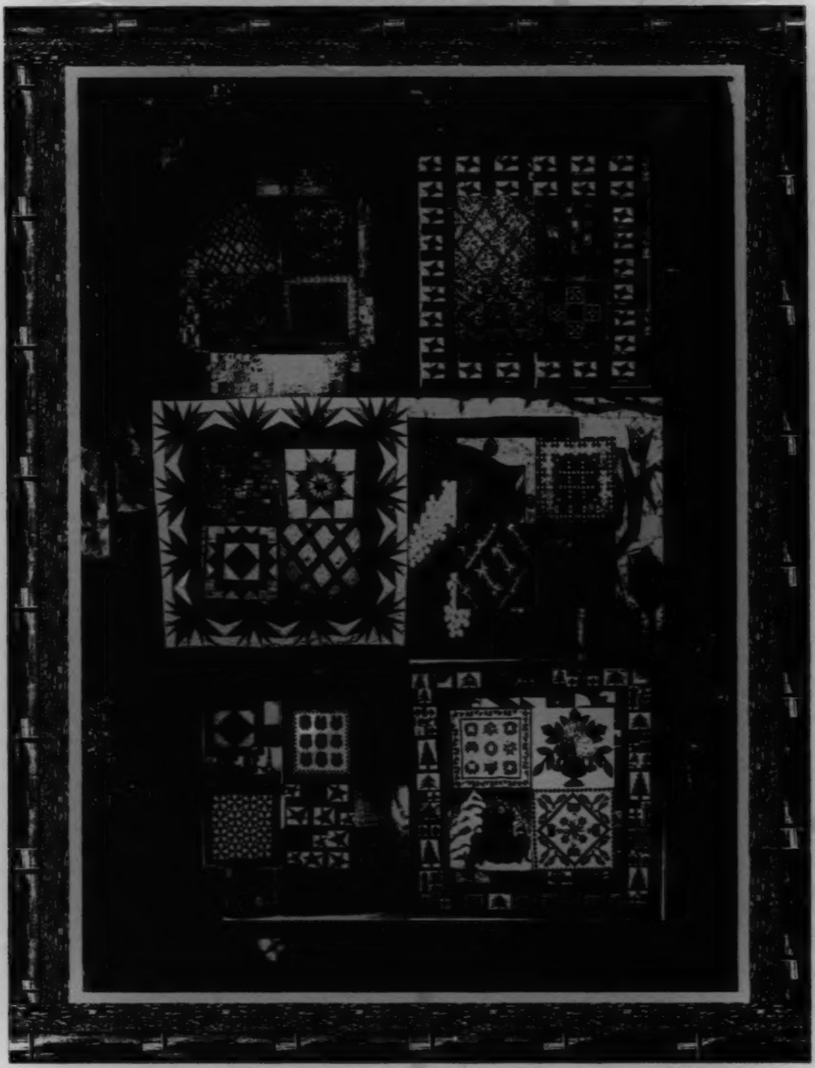
The philosophy and tenets of human ecology theory provides the foundation and the "nested circles" model inspired the research design. The broad question "Why quilt?" suits the holistic nature of the human ecology theory. This study applies a quilt-making process to better understand how and why quilting enhances lives. To maintain the integrity of quilting-as- knowing, processes such as "collecting a stash" and using a "design wall" are applied as the research methodology.

The participants consist of six women, five from an established quilt group plus the researcher, who is also a quilter. They were interviewed individually; their stories and photos of their quilts were collected. In addition, three consecutive weekly quilt sessions were videotaped and analyzed. For more depth, the researcher provided personal insights. Information from other sources was used to describe quilt culture and establish context.

The research materials were collected, analyzed, and presented as a virtual quilt made from both text and image, entitled, Fabric-ating Meaning. The voices (stories) and art (quilts) of the participants establish the basis for six "blocks" that were created to form a virtual quilt top. The top is the first of three layers that, together with batting and foundation/backing, forms the conceptual quilt/thesis. The batting is created from quilt literature, and the foundation is human ecology theory.

Fabric-ating Meaning

Virtual quilt created by Peggy Boss Mann 2001



The fabric of our lives are often referred to as a patchwork - of duties and pleasures, sorrows and joys, hopes and dreams. And our creative pursuits as the processes by which we make meaning of life's experiences and produce testaments to significant stages in our lives. The process involves reflection, perhaps revealing previously unseen or unfelt responses to a situation, be it personal or of a social nature. It may encourage healing and growth, as in a reconciliation between family, friends, or in the wider community. We could be described as co-creators of the world we live in, patching both past and future into the present, piecing together a story which reveals our capacities for self-creation, releasing us from the "already" familiar containments of life into expansive surprises, discoveries and breakthroughs! (Solomon, personal communication, October 2001)

Table of Contents

Background 1.
Human Ecology 2.
Quilting 7.
Fabricating Meaning 9.
Women's Knowing 11.
The Quilters 13.
The Bee 14.

Methodological Considerations 16.
Phenomenology 16.
Heuristics 17.
Ethnography 18.
Arts-based Research 19.
Portraiture 20.
Collage 23.
Custom Designed Methodology 26.

Designing a Research Quilt 28.
Collecting a Stash 29.
Virtual Design Wall 30.
Using a Virtual Design Wall 33.
Virtual Blocks 35.
Virtual Borders 38.
Sashing 39.
Creating Layers: Virtual Top, Batt, and Back 41.
Reviewing the Plan 45.

Virtual Quilt Components 48.
Peggy's Virtual Block 49.
Ellen's Virtual Block 69.
Faye's Virtual Block 82.
Gail's Virtual Block 92.

Sharon H's Virtual Block 106.
Sharon R's Virtual Block 119.
Inner Border 134.
Outer Border 146.

Assembling the Virtual Quilt 159.
Virtual Sandwich 159.
Quilting 160.
Binding 161.

Show and Tell 171.

Snipped Threads: Future Research 179.

Appendix A – Participant Documents 181.
Appendix B – Permission from Cathy Miller 183.
Appendix C – Technical Recording Equipment 184.
References 185.

List of Figures

Figure 1. Human Ecology Model of Human Environments 4
Figure 2. Gail's Design Wall 32
Figure 3. Ecological Research Quilt Mod[illegible] 34
Figure 4. Research Quilt Center Blocks 38
Figure 5. Research Quilt Borders 39
Figure 6. Research Quilt Model 41
Figure 7. *Gift of the Magi* Quilt 43
Figure 8. The NAMES Project *AIDS Memorial* Quilt 44
Figure 9. Layered Research Quilt 46
Figure 10. Peggy's Virtual Block 51
Figure 11. Country Line Dance 61
Figure 12. First Quilt 61
Figure 13. Lucky Thirteen 61
Figure 14a. Blue Satin Wishes 62
Figure 14b. Blue Satin Wishes - detail 62
Figure 15a. Rose Garden - front 63
Figure 15b. Rose Garden - back 63
Figure 16a. Daily Celebrations – front 64
Figure 16b. Daily Celebrations – back 64
Figure 17. Friendship Star Log Cabin Virtual Quilt 65
Figure 17a. Friendship Star Log Cabin Diagram 58
Figure 17b. Friendship Star Log Cabin Fabric Blocks 65
Figure 18. Earth and Sky – detail 66
Figure 19. Reach for the Stars 66
Figure 20. Country Stars 67
Figure 21. Pansies 67
Figure 22. Waltz 68
Figure 23. Building Blocks 68
Figure 24. Ellen's Virtual Block 69
Figure 25. Double Irish Chain 79

Figure 26. Magic Tiles 79
Figure 27. Nana's Garden 80
Figure 28. Mystery Quilt 80
Figure 29. Lonestar 1 81
Figure 30. Tessellations 81
Figure 31. Round Robin Sampler 81
Figure 32. Faye's Virtual Block 82
Figure 33. Sewing Room 88
Figure 34. Leaves Appliquéd on Sweatshirt 88
Figure 35. Family Room Quilt 89
Figure 36. Empty Vests 89
Figure 37. Sunflower 90
Figure 38. Leaf Appliqué 90
Figure 39. Traditional Display 90
Figure 40. Table Runner 91
Figure 41. Sampler 91
Figure 42. Ohio Stars 91
Figure 43. Table Topper 91
Figure 44. Gail's Virtual Block 92
Figure 45. First Stars 101
Figure 46. Nursery Rhymes 101
Figure 47. Baltimore Album 102
Figure 48. Elva's Garden 102
Figure 49. Fall Colours 103
Figure 50. Christmas Carolers 103
Figure 51. Taking Chances 104
Figure 52. Autumn Splendor 105
Figure 53. Grandmother's Album 105
Figure 54. Sampler 105
Figure 55. Wildberry Vines 105
Figure 56. Rail Fence 105
Figure 57. Sharon H's Virtual Block 106

Figure 58. Grandma's Lace 115
Figure 59. Cathedral Windows 115
Figure 60 Lonestar 2 116
Figure 61. Monet's Star 116
Figure 62a. Path of Light – front 117
Figure 62b. Arranging Squares 117
Figure 62c. Path of Light – back 117
Figure 62d. EDQG Winner June, 2001 118
Figure 63. Suns on Black 118
Figure 64. Carolina Lily 118
Figure 65. Still Sewing 118
Figure 66. Suns on Blue 118
Figure 67. Sharon R's Virtual Block 119
Figure 68. Washington Sidewalk 129
Figure 69. Black, White and Thread 129
Figure 70. Bourgogne Surrounded – detail 130
Figure 71. Squeezed for Time 130
Figure 72. Learned Smiles 131
Figure 73. Life is Change 131
Figure 74. Orange Peels on Linoleum 132
Figure 75. Robins in the Garden 132
Figure 76. Bargello 133
Figure 77. Stars on Black 133
Figure 78. Tropical Nocturne 133
Figure 79. Watercolour Butterfly 133
Figure 80. *Gift of the Magi* and Quote 134
Figure 81. The NAMES Project *AIDS Memorial Quilt* and Quote 146
Figure 82a. Lori's Country Cottage 1 158
Figure 82b. Lori's Country Cottage 2 158
Figure 82c. Lori's Country Cottage 3 158
Figure 83. *Fabricating Meaning* 177

List of Abbreviations and Symbols

1. EDQG = Edmonton District Quilters Guild

2. Interview References:
(Name, Type of Communication/Tape Identification/Location on Tape)
eg. (Ellen, I / 1A / 150): Ellen, Audio Interview, Tape 1, Side A, Number 150
I = Interview on audiotape
VT = Videotape
1A = Tape 1, Side A
1B = Tape 1, Side B
2A = Tape 2, Side A
2B = Tape 2, Side B

3. “---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---” This symbolizes a quilter’s blanket stitch. It is used to connect sections of the research into a patchwork, imitating a fabric quilt.

Preface

The format of this thesis is much like an actual, fabric quilt because patches of text and images are pieced together with distinct breaks between them. Sections have been assembled often without transitional words to connect them. It is a post-modern creation, as I understand it, in which bits of content from various sources are assembled into a document with one dominant theme.

The document grew out of the belief that quilting is a way of knowing, although the research did not begin that way. The thesis is generally chronological and unfolds in much the same way that the research process did, although not entirely. As with any quilt, some sections need to be ripped apart and re-stitched somewhere else.

This research was exploratory and took off in directions I could not have predicted. Some parts of the text are confusing – as they were to me at the time – and require the reader's willingness to play along. The research could have taken many directions, but I chose to create an authentically quilt-like thesis. As the study progressed, I became less concerned about outcome than process and presentation. Could I have made other choices? Would these choices have had other outcomes? Absolutely but, like all my quilts, the process was enlightening.

Background

In 1993 a quilter in Saudi Arabia affected me. She taught my mother-in-law how to do patchwork, my mother-in-law taught me. This wrinkled woman who lived in a world of incense and olive oil had no idea what she had inspired. The following paper is a tribute to her generosity and the generosity of other quilters. Hopefully it will inform others about the value of quilting.

When my mother-in-law returned she transformed her home office into a sewing room. I shadowed her journey: petting and arranging cottons, dreaming through magazines, and sewing simple blocks. Quilting captivated us. What was the attraction? I needed to find out.

As an outsider the patchwork community seemed suspiciously exuberant. Was their vitality artificial? Would saccharine-sweet women smelling of lavender be selling fabrics and sewing machines? After a time, when I realized that most quilters really were pleasant, I became more curious. Were caring individuals attracted to quilting or was it the quilting environment that enhanced people's best qualities?

My growing interest coincided with a decision to attend graduate school. As a mature student, I had a wide range of life experiences as well as degrees in both human ecology and education. Contributions to this research also came from many people, directly and indirectly. My interest in women, quilting and knowing was, and still is, part of who I am. It was from my life perspective that my questions and this study evolved.

This thesis is a research quilt. Sections of image and text coincide with thoughts and questions I explored as I sought understanding. It loosely follows the chronology of my discovery process; it is a research patchwork. (I used "quilt" and "patchwork" interchangeably throughout this document.) Philosophical underpinnings are derived from human ecology theory.

The research process was based upon my knowledge of quilt making. I began with an idea then, proceeding as though this was a quilt project, I found resources with which to work. Instead of fabric and thread I used language and photographs. Each piece of information was carefully considered and compared one to another, selected for meaning and relevance. Also like fabrics in a quilt, not all pieces "worked". Some choices were better than others because they enhanced the patchwork as a whole. These materials were threaded together with a blanket stitch (---^---^---^---^---^---). Many very interesting scraps were set aside, possibly for another project. Words and pictures were intentionally put together to show contrasts, support each other and generally create a meaningful statement. This thesis is presented as a patchwork of text and image. It is designed to stimulate the imagination and to inspire new understanding. Perception will vary according to the individual reader, who will discover a kaleidoscopic variety of colour, value and texture.

Human Ecology

The philosophy and theory of human ecology influenced this research quilt. Human ecologists view life and environment holistically. As parts of a larger whole, they are inseparable. In 1892, as an extension of Darwin's theories of the nineteenth century, Ellen Richards conceptualized home and family as an ecology. For the socially conscious, this new understanding helped to diagnose problems and improve well-being for families, women and children. (Bubolz & Sontag, 1993). When home economics became a formal field of study, the underpinnings were clearly based in ecology.

> Home Economics in its most comprehensive sense is the study of the laws, conditions, principles and ideals which are concerned on the one hand with man's immediate physical environment and on the other hand with his nature as a social being and is the study specially of the relation between these two factors. (American Home Economics Association, 1902)
>
> (Cited in Bubolz & Sontag, 1993, p. 420)

Although a century has passed, the understanding that humans are linked to a multi-faceted environment remains key to human ecology. Margaret Bubolz and Suzanne Sontag write,

> Human ecology is concerned with interaction and interdependence of humans (as individuals, groups, and societies) with the environment. A key process is adaptation by humans of and to their environments.

> ...Attention is given to the importance of selective perception, values, decision making, and human actions as they influence adaptation and the selection and use of resources a means toward attainment of goals, satisfaction of needs, and quality of the environment (Bubolz & Sontag, 1993, p. 421-422).

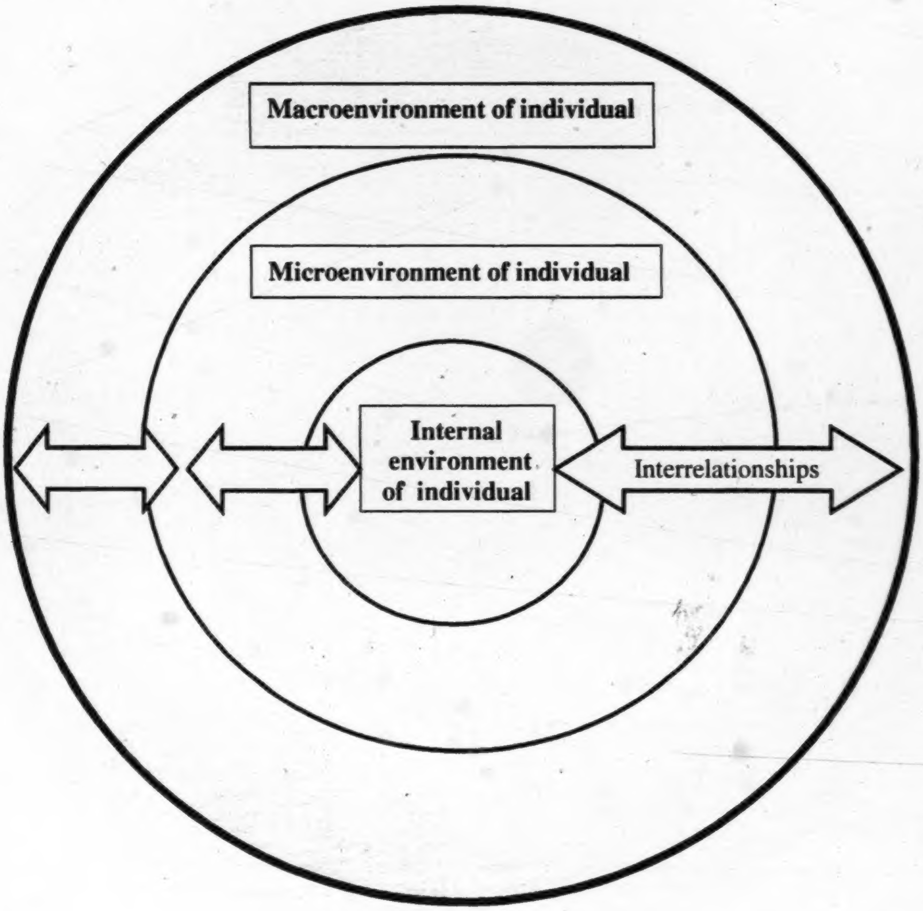
Figure 1 is an adaptation of the human ecology model described in Bubolz & Sontag (1993).

To understand how a large ecosystem works it is necessary to learn about the components. Research of activities at a microlevel can teach us about the environment at a macrolevel (Bubolz & Sontag, 1993). John Visvader states, "Social systems and ecosystems are intimately connected, and the study of one casts light on the nature of the other" (Visvader, 1986, p. 122).

An ecological model allows for a holistic approach to research, in which complex relationships between parts and wholes are documented and analyzed. The conceptualization of humans as part of a larger environment indicates a trend away from isolationist studies (Visvader, 1986).

People are active social and biological agents within their environments, which are subjectively experienced, and interpreted (Bubolz & Sontag 1993). Through perception, values and use of resources, humans are able to adapt to environmental change. One individual or a small group may bring about personal and social changes. From an ecological perspective there is an interrelationship between the quality of human life and the quality of the environment.

Figure 1. **Human Ecology Model of Human Environments**
Adapted from Bubolz & Sontag, 1993


Macroenvironment of individual
Microenvironment of individual
Internal environment of individual
Interrelationships

The purpose of human ecological research is to improve human well-being and quality of life (Buboltz & Sontag, 1995; Westney, 1993; Westney, Brabble, & Edwards, 1988). Sheldon Tobin (1996), Urie Bronfenbrenner (In Henderson, 1995), and Mihaly Csikszentmihaly (1991) have expressed concern about the fragmentation and alienation of people and society.

Some people believe we need to find new, creative ways to reconnect emotionally, socially and spiritually (Eisner, 1999; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997; Cziksenthimihalyi, 1991; Cziksenthimihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981). Bubolz and Sontag (1993) write that human ecologists ought to study the relationship between objects, their meanings and how to bring about changes necessary for individual and social wellbeing. Can quilting teach us about re-connecting with others and ourselves?

Quilting seems to improve one's sense of well-being. Perhaps a human ecological perspective of quilts and quilt culture will help explain why. Human ecology provides a familiar, holistic framework from which to understand the dynamics between women and quiltmaking.

Quilting

As an activity and a symbolic system, quilting has roots that anchor deep into the feminine psyche. Radka Donnell (1990) says quilting is an ancient form of women's art that is related to touch and the intimacy of the body and home. Quilts are active sites that represent both separateness and connection to others. Alissa Norton writes,

> While it does resemble other art forms in some aspects, the quilt distinguishes itself with an exceptionally rich and unique history of utility, community, and activism. Quiltmaking also stands out as one of a few contemporary art forms that is, and always has been, dominated by women (Norton, 2000, p. 7).

Quilts are archetypal symbols of home, security and wellbeing. American artist Robert Rauschenberg (1955) discovered their power when working on his piece, *Bed*. In this collage, Rauschenberg splashed a quilt with paint to provide a counterpoint to the warm, domestic feelings it represented.

> I was simply using the patterns that were already in the quilt as some sort of a challenge or threat – seeing what would happen working against or with them, and I wasn't doing very well. The quilt had so many nostalgic connotations that it remained much more direct than any of my actions so I thought the only thing to do is go along with that. So I added a pillow (Rauschenberg cited in Wainwright, 1996, p. 199).

Margaret Atwood (1996) based her novel *Alias Grace* on a true story about a Canadian woman accused of murder at turn of the twentieth century. Atwood's use of a quilting theme and structure reinforced the female character and her situation, and provided details and symbolism otherwise unavailable. The movie *How to Make an American Quilt* was inspired by Whitney Otto's (1991) novel of the same name. The story relates how the activity of quilting connects two generations of women. In *Quilting Now and Then* , Karen Willing and Julie Dock (1994) present an aspect of women's history for juvenile readers. Canadian singer, songwriter and quilter Cathy Miller (2000) compiled *One Stitch at a Time*, a compact disc of music based on quilting experiences. Gail Hunt (1996) and her family ventured thousands of miles to record the story of an outstanding quilter from each Canadian province and the territories in *Quiltworks Across Canada: Eleven Contemporary Workshops.*

It seemed that the same vague characteristics that endeared quilting to me also affected others similarly. Atwood understood the perspective of quilters as knowers and makers of meaning and fashioned it into a story. Otto (1991), and Willing and Dock (1994) used patchwork to pass stories and knowledge from one generation to another and by doing so, one also learns about self. Miller's music is an example of how quilting can engage other facets of creativity and endeavor. Hunt's passion for quilting influenced her entire ecology: family, social and work environment. Looking beneath the pretty façade of quilting surface design reveals depth and detail of a complicated art.

The resurgence of quilting began during the 1970's feminist movement in North America; since then interest in quilting spread worldwide. A web search using canada.com on December 2, 2000 resulted in 74,493 hits. Of the first ten, two had international connections: the AIDS Memorial Quilt and a list of international quilt shows. Four sites were given for computer-related information such as design forums, a lost quilt site, software, technical support and companion materials. Quilt books and magazines were highlighted in three places, and the New England Quilt Museum accounted for the tenth.

Economic development is related to increased quiltmaking activity. Businesses such as fabric stores and manufacturers, collectors, sewing and quilting machines, books, magazines, classes and conferences are growing.

Local businesswoman Lori Boesecke explained how her business, Lori's Country Cottage, evolved. Initially she opened a fabric store with a wide variety of textiles. Lori soon realized that only quilting cottons were in constant demand, so she changed the store's focus to quilts. Her store now offers a large range of designer quilt fabrics, patterns, a newsletter, machine quilting, finished quilts, books, classes and workshops.

In Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, quilting activity has increased. According to Catherine DeBree (personal communication, February 2, 2001), membership chair for the Edmonton and District Quilters Guild, membership quadrupled in the past decade. For the 2000/2001 season there are about three hundred members, up from seventy-five members in 1990.

When queried, e-mail from women belonging to the internet group H-Quilts revealed increased quilt activity. The Capital City Quilt Guild in Lansing Michigan grew from thirty members in 1984 to two hundred members in 2000. Quilters Unlimited in North Virginia began with twenty-five members in 1972 and currently has twelve hundred members. In Sacramento, the River City Quilters' Guild grew from twelve members in 1972, to four hundred thirty-seven members in 2000. Ellen Sue Blakey (Personal communication, November 22, 2000) from the Dancing Bear Folk Center in Thermopolis, Wyoming explained that in her very small, economically depressed community, quilt related activity is thriving. She referred to a new guild, a new museum with a textile studio that is primarily used by quilters, exhibits to display the quilts, exhibits by high school students, and dozens of quilt stores.

Prior to the twentieth century, North American women were often excluded from public life, including formal education, religion and government. According to Rosika Parker (1989), quiltmaking was expected to keep women from getting involved in political arenas. While this may be an overstatement, historically it seems a woman's value was partly determined by her sewing skills.

Needlework was central to the experience and education of women (Shaw, 1997; Eisler, 1995; Barber, 1994; Parker, 1989; Ferrero, Hedges & Silber, 1987). Sewing was practical, but it also provided an opportunity to gather. Within a quilting circle, women could talk, form and maintain relationships, and share ideas.

---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Sewing activities could teach social skills and inculcate feminine traits, but they also provided women opportunities for personal, artistic and social expression, and political activism (Cross, 1996; Donnell, 1990; Lipsett, 1985; Weizman & Eliot-Los, 1984; Cooper & Buferd, 1978; Conroy, 1976). Quilting sessions were socially acceptable ways for women to gather and learn about a broad range of subjects. But quilters' conversations were more than just casual socializing (Irwin, 1999; Carow, 1997). For example, songs by Cathy Miller (2000) such as *The Rajah Quilt* and *One Stitch at a Time* commemorate the social activism of Elizabeth Fry and Mary-Anne Rooney respectively.

The feminist movement began in the mid-nineteenth century when a group of American women, including Susan B. Anthony, gathered to quilt and converse (Woods, 1995). About fifty years later, reformer Nellie McClung was at a quilt group meeting when she signed a petition requesting the right to vote for Canadian women (Irwin et al., 1998). The recent quilting revival parallels the feminist movement of the 1970's (Woods, 1995; Donnell, 1990).

Mary Lou Woods (1995) reports that two-thirds (two hundred seventy-eight) of the participants in her Canadian study of quilters became more socially active. They sewed quilts for local and international charities such as AIDS, women's shelters, the Red Cross, Ronald MacDonald houses and world peace. While political and social action may not be the intent of quilters, it has certainly facilitated women's participation in public arenas.

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

What is it about quilting that has sparked such an interest among thousands of women worldwide? Why does quilting continue to be primarily a woman's activity? Could it be that quilt culture provides unique environments - systems developed and maintained by women on their own terms?

Quilting seems to be a way of knowing: an intuitive and malleable form of communication. Conversations over patchwork seem to improve personal and a collective sense of well-being. But how? Quilting is more than just a relaxing hobby; it has impacted the global community in subtle and not-so-subtle ways.

An ecological perspective would provide a holistic framework needed to allow broad research options, and determine gaps in my understanding. Referring back to the human ecology model, I realized I had information from two of the nested circles. I had my own quilting experiences (from the innermost circle), and I now had some broader information about quilt culture (from the outermost circle). I was missing data from the middle ring. To extend my understanding it would be necessary to learn more about other quilters and perhaps a small group of quilters. What were their stories? Why did they belong to patchwork groups? What do they find meaningful about the quilting experience? Once I had a better understanding about other quilters, I could begin to explore and understand the interrelationships between and within quilt culture.

Fabric-ating Meaning

Quilting became a metaphor for the way I perceived the world. Patterns and contrasts in my life seemed to parallel elements of quilt design. Knowing about quilting affected how I knew other aspects of my life.

I thought about how knowledge is created and transmitted. I thumbed through my dictionary looking for synonyms for "knowledge", and serendipitously came across the word, "educe". (It comes after "education".) Taken from the Latin ex- out and ducere- lead, educe means to "bring out; draw forth; elicit; develop" (Drysdale & Neufeldt, 1983, p. 377). It seemed to be the opposite of "reduce", a word with positivistic connotations of a correct approach, or an ultimate truth. For me quilting is a way to educe knowledge through a process of creative exploration. I tacked a copy of the definition above my desk, convinced that "educe" was a clue with which to investigate my research question.

A pioneer in the field of art psychology, Rudolf Arnheim (1989) asserts that the creation and perception of art is the key to learning. He reveals that the senses are essential to cognition, and that intuition and intellect work together to form perception. In order to understand the world, people must be able to recognize and see patterns as parts of a whole.

Elliot Eisner (1991b) believes that engagement with visual arts helped him develop an approach to inquiry that involves seeing rather than merely looking. Eisner's notion of the "enlightened eye" affects every aspect of his life. Engagement in the arts has helped him develop a particular process of search and discovery linked to observations and images.

People create knowledge based upon sensory experience. Joan McLeod writes,

> All knowledge begins in experience…experience is always, and fundamentally, sensory…. So knowledge is sensory. Experience is sensory, primarily where it starts; but experience is also thought. You don't have sensory experience without thought. …There is not thought without affective response. There is no thought either without psycho-motor response (McLeod, 1987, pp. 11-12).

Humans structure sensory information in ways that are meaningful, but first one must attend to the sensory stimulus. McLeod says that before learning can occur an individual's imagination has to be engaged. We must be paying attention. As we attend to new information, we fit it into our existing patterns of knowledge. Not all sensory experiences stay with us. Personal filters affect what information is processed and how it is structured (ibid).

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Reality is constructed when people process and edit sensory information. McLeod says intuition is the moment when we understand how something fits with what we already know, calling it "the moment of metaphor". She explains that people unify, order and encode information so that it can be understood and shared with others.

McLeod states there are five ways in which thoughts can be symbolized so that people can communicate: word, image, number, sound and gesture. Ideas that need to be expressed will determine which system is chosen. Using only one system limits the way we understand the world and the way we can express our knowledge.

Women's Knowing

Carolyn Heilbrun (1989) says that in our culture, language is the symbolic system of choice. She states that some concepts that are central to women's understanding are not easily expressed because language is a gendered system. Heilbrun believes that understanding how women experience and negotiate the world requires a broad, creative approach that goes beyond language.

Judy Norris (1997) also challenges textual forms of knowledge and representation because of their limitations. She writes, "My intent [is] to provoke awareness about artful forms for representing knowledge, and to encourage the reader to notice how our current structures work against these forms being taken seriously as ways of knowing" (Norris, 1997, p. 89).

It is possible that visual stimulus of quilts attract attention and engage our imaginations. Could the art of quilting, since it engages all senses and uses symbolic systems, attract women because it moves beyond the constraints of language? The process of patchwork appears to provide virtually unlimited symbolic options where we can explore, "What if…?".

My thinking changed when I started to quilt. I notice more colour, texture and pattern in my environment. I imagine how these design elements can be translated into patchwork. I might wonder, "How does this scene make me feel?" I am more open to emotion now that I have a medium with which to express it. When I sew small pieces of fabric together, I actively create unity, and I feel at peace. The finished quilt becomes a tangible reminder of that experience.

Until the 1980's woman's psychological development was assumed to be much the same as men's. Vanessa Bing and Pamela Reid (1996) assert that psychologists have used inappropriate assumptions and strategies when studying women. If some aspects of women's ways of knowing did not fit established theories, they were often dismissed as inferior. Current research about human development reveals that women and men learn in different ways (Gilligan, 1998/1982; Woyshner & Gelfond, 1998; Bing & Reid, 1996; Goldberger, Tarule, Clinchy & Belenky, 1996; Gilligan, Rogers & Tolman, 1991).

Carol Gilligan proposed that more research be done to describe the development of women's ways of knowing. In her groundbreaking book, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development,* Gilligan (1998/1982) reviewed developmental theories and their limited success explaining women's psychology, arguing that engendered theories were lacking. She found that women's characteristics, cooperation, nurturing and caring, are strengths that men are beginning to value and emulate. Gilligan states,

> …by restricting their voices, many women are wittingly or unwittingly perpetuating a male-voiced civilization and an order of living that is founded on disconnection from women. …Listening to women, I heard a difference and discovered that bringing in women's lives changes both psychology and history. It literally changes the voice: how the human story is told, and also who tells it (Gilligan, 1993, p. xi).

Over the past two decades some scholars have studied women's perspectives and ways of making meaning (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997; Goldberger et al., 1996; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1997/1986). Feminist researchers began by listening to women's stories to determine how they described learning experiences, gathered knowledge and constructed meaning. In doing so, the term "interrelatedness" became central to discussions about the way women know the world (Belenky et al., 1997/1986).

In the book *Women's Ways of Knowing*, Mary Belenky, Blythe Clinchy, Nancy Goldberger and Jill Tarule (1997/1986) analyzed women's stories. They began by listening to their respondents rather than imposing theories on them. They discovered that women gather knowledge and make meaning using various methods. Their research challenged positivistic notions of universal laws of human behaviour, objective reality, truth and knowledge.

Philosopher Jeremy Pratt (no date) writes that humans use tools, thought, and culture to construct a world of imagery, norms, and history. Our "inner" and "outer worlds" are connected by what he calls an "ecology of knowing". We use inner means such as words, stories, and models to understand and relate to the outer world. Of all of earth's creatures, only humans have the ability to think: to understand, create, and participate in the world using symbols.

Cynthia Taylor (no date) says Pratt's statements' are restricted, and that we ought to find ways of knowing other than reason, logic and language. Broadening our understanding involves moving beyond our infatuation with thinking. Taylor believes we need to examine knowing from the perspective of "pathos", "…a knowing that comes to us through feeling…it is prior to language. We might name it a feminine epistemology, a knowing that knows what it knows even if it cannot articulate how it knows (Taylor, no date, p. 104, emphasis in original)." Pathos implies being in relationships and empathizing with others, which seems characteristic of quilt culture.

Could quilting be an "ecology of knowing" with a "feminine epistemology"? It may be possible, for as Gilligan states, "…the way people talk about their lives is of significance, that the language they use and the connections they make reveal the world that they see and in which they act (Gilligan, 1998, p. 2)." Investigating quilters may lead to a better understanding of how these women fabric-ate meaning about themselves and the world.

The Quilters

With the exception of me, participants are regular members of a 'worker bee' that is a smaller sub-group of the Edmonton District Quilters Guild. These individual quilters – Ellen, Faye, Gail, Sharon H. and Sharon R. – all live in the suburb of Sherwood Park. Except for a common interest in quilting, these women may not otherwise have known each other. They met when the group first formed less than a decade ago.

In her fifties, Ellen is married with three grown children. A grandmother of two, she has been quilting for about ten years. Faye has also quilted for about a decade. In her forties, she is married with two grown children. Gail's involvement with quilting includes teaching and working at a local - store. In her fifties, she is married with three grown sons. Sharon H. is an active quilt teacher. Married with two grown children and two grandchildren, she has been quilting for about twenty years. Sharon R. has been quilting for more than a dozen years. Married with grown twin daughters, she recently began teaching for a fabric store in Edmonton.

I met these women before I began this study, through a member who has since moved away. This bee generally meets weekly at members' homes, to work on individual and group projects. I have been an ad hoc member of the group for over two years. In my early forties, I am married with three teenage children. I have made several simple quilts but I still consider myself to be a beginner.

The Bee

These fun loving women provide each other with friendship, support and encouragement. In the four years that the bee has been together, a solid, trusting relationship has developed. Although they did not know one another initially, they have become comfortable enough to tease and challenge each other. These caring women have a lively sense of humour; laughter is an essential part of the group. To the uninitiated, their gatherings may seem silly or trivial, but they are not.

As a collective activity, quilting can also be consciousness-raising and edifying. Mary Belenky (1996) admits to having once dismissed a women's study group because she misread their conversations as too "cozy". She now recognizes that for those women, the sharing of experiences was a form of connected knowing that is typical for many women.

Jeremy Pratt (no date) writes that knowledge evolves over time and the changes to knowledge first occur in the collective unconscious of a group. The symbolism accepted by a group of individuals is renegotiated over time. Pratt asserts, "...the internalization of imagery occurred first as a collective process, and only later as a process marking 'individuality' (ibid, p. 98)." As groups discover new levels of consciousness, the symbols evolve, which has ecological implications for individuals and the culture.

Methodological Considerations

To this point, I had found a topic of interest and a group of quilters to participate in my study. What remained elusive was the methodological approach I would choose for the research. I considered several, but although each was initially promising, certain aspects were problematic. The following section provides a discussion of the options that were considered and what was ultimately decided.

Phenomenology

Phenomenology is defined as, "The purely descriptive study of consciousness and the objects of consciousness (phenomena), without any attempt to explain causes, origins, etc." (Drysdale & Neufeldt, 1983, p. 847). Phenomenology is used to explore the social construction of knowledge and how meaning and experience are understood and communicated in everyday life (Holstein & Gubruim, 1998; Anderson, 1989).

Max Van Manen (1998) says phenomenologists study the essence of life experiences. To do so they use a concept they call reduction, in which the researcher is bracketed out of the researched experience. First described by Husserl, who was once a mathematician, this involves setting aside all one knows about an experience and trying to enter the situation without theories or preconceived notions (ibid).

Initially phenomenology was enticing but I was reluctant to bracket myself out of the study. If I chose this approach, I would not be able to use my knowledge and experience as a quilter. Due to the potentially intimate nature of some quilters' conversations, a certain level of trust needed to be attained and maintained. I believed that my experience as a quilter was important to this research. I also had a sense that I would be unable to distance myself from the experience.

As a "connected knower" (Belenky et al., 1997/1986; Goldberger et al., 1996; Gilligan 1982), I have an understanding of the relationship between my respondents and their quilt environment. Connected knowing is based on the belief that individual experiences are more trustworthy than statements of one considered to be an authority (Belenky et al., 1997/1986). Applying my knowing to the project seemed to enhance rather than detract from my mission. I wanted to educe knowledge from a broad range of resources, rather than reduce my options.

The concept of connected knowing also influences the perception of the participants and the reader. Knowledge that is shared is interpreted by individual life experiences. Meaning is created by those involved in the creation and presentation of this research quilt; varied interpretations will enrich this project.

Heuristics

Using personal reflection was another methodological option. Michael Polanyi (1966) states that indwelling is a way to gain access to new meaning through tacit knowing, which is critical to all knowledge.

According to humanistic psychologists Bruce Douglass and Clark Moustakas (1985), heuristic research involves investigating phenomena by focusing one's inner experiences. Heuristics is the internal process for dealing with sensory information. They state,

> Heuristic research is a search for the discovery of meaning and essence in significant human experience. It requires a subjective process of reflecting, exploring, sifting, and elucidating the nature of the phenomenon under investigation. Its ultimate purpose is to cast light on a focused problem, question, or theme (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985, p. 40).

After much consideration, Douglass and Moustakas say the direction for research becomes clear and the acquisition phase begins. Tacit knowledge is identified and described, thereby revealing themes, patterns and associations. Along with other data, these elements create a new awareness in the conscious mind. The researcher alternately focuses, then differentiates between each of the meanings.

Douglass and Moustakas (ibid) also say that as knowledge is revealed through a process of creative discovery, one becomes more immersed in the dialogue to discover deeper meanings and new distinctions. Heuristic learning requires a holistic perspective while the seeker of knowledge remains at the centre of the inquiry. Self- reflection, conversations with others, intuition and tacit knowing are synthesized into a deeper understanding of the topic. Douglass and Moustakas, like

Michael Polyani (1966), believe that heuristic synthesis is the essence of all discoveries.

Mihalyi Csikszentmihaly and Eugene Rochberg-Halton (1998/1981) used heuristic inquiry to seek a better understanding of the meaning of objects. They felt the flexibility of the approach gave them more leads than a conventional approach might provide.

Through heuristic exploration I began to view my research as a quilt. The metaphor made sense and I built on my personal experiences. For example, I saw data as fabric from which I could cut various pieces, arrange and re-arrange until patterns developed. My project involved more than just my own insights; there were other stories to tell.

Ethnography

Moving from a very individual perspective to a holistic one, I recognized that quilters could be defined as a culture. From that perspective, it might be possible to undertake an ethnographic study. I could be a participant-researcher and describe commonly shared perceptions and experiences of the quilters. This methodology was rejected because ethnography generally focuses on developing a social taxonomy (Van Manen, 1998). I did not want to sacrifice the human experiences that were essential to my research. Clifford Geertz popularized a variation of ethnography, called "thick description" (Cited in Van Manen, 1998, p. 178). This method involves presenting and organizing stories in order to delve more deeply into meaning. This variation had potential.

I had not yet identified a single methodology that would be entirely suitable so I stepped back to look at the research as a whole. The purpose was to use human ecology theory to explore possible relationships between quilting and knowing. My goal for this study was to explore possibilities, not to find definitive answers. Nonjustificational research, such as I envisioned encourages on-going dialogue rather than attempting to win an argument (Mahoney, 1996). Mahoney writes,

> Instead of looking for flaws, arguing, and doubting, the connected knower [is]…predominantly empathic, exploratory and affirming…such presence with others both requires and deepens a

> presence with self – a capacity to see, hear, smell, taste, feel, and intuit the multiplex 'selfing process' from which all presence to others springs (Mahoney 1996, p.134).

Still something was missing. I considered several possibilities until I began to follow a thread I called "quilting as art".

Arts-based research

Shaun McNiff defines arts-based research as the, "…use of the arts as objects of inquiry as well as modes of investigation (McNiff, 1998, p. 15)." Artistic expression and creative innovation have been overshadowed by research based on the traditions of language and number. Elliot Eisner (In Norris, 1997) points out that in our culture, the arts are associated with emotions, not knowledge. Some mistakenly still believe that a more direct route to knowledge is through science. But Howard Gardener (1983) theorized that people possessed multiple intelligences. The value of creativity, for example, is seldom recognized by western education systems (McNiff, 1998). Some believe that creativity is educated out of children so they learn to conform (Norris, 1997).

Epistemology is limited to the symbolic structures we use to explore knowledge (McNiff, 1998; Arnheim, 1989; Lipman, 1967; Ecker, 1963). Western culture has been biased toward language and number. Arts-based research can open new paths to understanding because humans create meaning in many different ways. McNiff writes,

> The word 'research' means to study thoroughly. …we have generally accepted the idea that research and scientific investigation are synonymous. By identifying the word research with only one of its aspects we are limiting possibilities for advancement through new and imaginative inquiries. …I actually believe that scientifically-oriented inquiries will be revitalized if we can create a more diverse research environment (McNiff, 1998, p. 21).

In order to use art to pursue knowledge, one must be willing to explore the unknown, a process that Shaun McNiff calls "creative discovery". He describes arts-based research as an unpredictable experience, saying there is a likelihood of discovering one's own personal path, rather than following a prescribed methodology. McNiff found that research methods often combine and overlap with each other. There is a similarity between heuristic inquiry and an arts-based approach to research; both require personal reflection and creative discovery.

There have been many types of arts-based research. Examples include drama and performance (Norris, 2000; Saldana, 1997; Donmoyer & Yennie-Donmoyer, 1995), film and video (Norris & Mirror theatre, 2000, 1999, 1994, 1990), screenplay (Boss, 1999, unpublished masters thesis), visual arts (Finley & Knowles, 1995), and story (Barone, 1990). Research such as this challenges traditional academics. In *Knowledge, Difference and Power: Essays inspired by Women's Ways of Knowing,* Anne Stanton asserts, "The very notion of knowledge and truth has shifted; as critics call into question such concepts as universal and ahistorical laws of human behavior and the existence of an objective reality that can be represented reliably by language" (In Goldberger et al., 1993, p.32).

Whether seeking meaning or making meaning, quilting seems to provide a creative, recursive process for knowing.

Portraiture

Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot and Jessica Davis (1997) developed the arts-based methodology of portraiture. These researchers attend to internal and external contexts to draw out, gather, and present data documenting behaviour and experience. This process is interactional, conversational and dynamic. Data evolves and is shaped into a visual narrative, or portrait. Authenticity and resonance is derived from holistic representation of the data. A salient quality of portraiture is that it resists the scientific tradition of documenting failure.

> In examining the dimensionality and complexity of goodness there will, of course, be ample evidence of vulnerability and weakness. In fact, the counterpoint and contradictions of strength and vulnerability, virtue and evil (and how people, cultures, and organizations negotiate those extremes in an effort to establish the precarious balance between them) are central to the expression of goodness (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 9).

One of the goals of portraiture is to reach a broader audience. Narrative, symbolism and metaphor are used to draw readers into conversations about meaningful issues. Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis resist academically encoded language and presentational forms, choosing instead to "write to inform and inspire readers" (ibid, p. 10).

For Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, art offers new ways of thinking and seeing. They assert that very real discoveries can be made when working with visual images. Art can transform people because while we create it, our understanding of the self and the world changes.

Portraiture offered many excellent possibilities for my research. It is holistic, it uses language and visual art, and it reaches an eclectic audience and stimulates conversation. My concern was the medium of choice. Painting and the "fine" arts were generally reserved for men, and fabric art was the traditional domain of women. Rudolf Arnheim (1989) considered fabric designers and potters to be equal, if not better than the artistic elite, because of the practical nature of their art form. When a practical concept is so well understood that it is used as a metaphor, it has become ingrained in the collective conscious of that group. Joan McLeod (1987) said that people use metaphor to explain something to which others can intuitively relate.

Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) used a quilting metaphor throughout *The Art and Science of Portraiture* to underscore the points they make. Three examples follow:

> The process of creating a whole often feels like weaving a tapestry or piecing together a quilt (p. 12) and,
>
> Returning to our quilting metaphor, researchers working as a group develop a pattern for their tapestries and proceed synchronously in their selecting and sorting of fabric shapes, even as they rearrange their placement and alter their stitch to fit individual circumstances and settings (p. 263) and,
>
> If we extend our quilting metaphor: context functions as the underlying cloth of which the design is sewn, emergent themes are revealed as the shapes that will be fit and joining the seams that hold them, and relationship is viewed as imbuing the aesthetic whole of the finished quilt with symbolic meaning (p. 268).

The use of quilting as a metaphor indicates it is a cultural archetype. Since Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis use patchwork to explain portraiture, the former must be more easily understood. Why use quilting as a metaphor, when it can be explored as a source of knowing?

I considered creating a quilt - instead of a portrait - as part of the research process, but the logistics became overwhelming. My time and skills were limited. Could I accurately portray my participants? Would the quilters be willing to spend hours, perhaps days, to help make a collaborative quilt? Who would pay for the materials and who would keep it? Although intriguing, making a fabric quilt was unlikely at this time.

Rita Irwin (1998) was one of a group of female educators who created a collaborative quilt. She believes that there is a shift away from the independent artist, toward connected, interdependent art with a social consciousness. She writes,

> In a connective aesthetic, enlightened listening (Levin, 1989) which seeks shared understanding, would encourage each of us to recognize and understand our interdependence as we give voice to ourselves and to others…Connective aesthetics resonates with the attributes of feminist pedagogy (Irwin, 1999, p. 36).

Irwin also believes feminist concepts such as dialogue, community building, and empowerment, which is also characteristic of quilt culture, can be incorporated into arts-based strategies.

Pratt (no date) writes that knowledge first occurred in the collective unconscious, "…the internalization of imagery occurred first as a collective process, and only later as a process marking 'individuality' (ibid, p. 98)." As groups discover new levels of consciousness, the symbols evolve, which has ecological implications for change. The longevity of quilting indicates that the community has worked through generations of change.

The recent growth of quilting suggests that women want to express themselves as individuals, within an environment they designed and continue to create. Language and visual media of quilting may be perceived as a safe way for women to speak. Patricia Munhall (1995) says that silencing women invalidates them, but by speaking out they risk ridicule, threats or being ostracized.

> There must be public language, places for secrets to be revealed and kept and shared and the teller supported. I worry because we have made advances yet we don't always see ourselves as a group. Perhaps the individual woman is at the forefront. We need to look at each other. If we continue with focusing on individual stuff and not on the web of connectedness, some very serious political machinations are going to occur and force our secrets further underground (Munhall, 1995a, p. 206).

Munhall might agree that quilters' secrets can be publicly revealed through display of their work. Messages may be implicit or explicit, encoded in the visual design or explained in accompanying text or story. For example, Linda Platt's *Childhood Trauma Game* (In Norton, 2000, pp. 80-81) is a quilt about abuse that combines both language and image as the visual art. Platt's powerful statement may never make headlines, but it will raise the consciousness of countless people who see her quilt.

Collage

Having eliminated an actual quilt, I explored other possibilities. Perhaps the group or I could make a collage from fabric. A collage is a composition of items such as magazine and newspaper clippings, photographs, buttons, paper or string arranged on a background. Collage techniques can be used for images, textiles, ceramics, music, and even poetry (Sullivan, 2000).

Artist Louise Cadillac (2000) noticed that the medium of collage is gaining in popularity. There is an abundance of materials and ideas available so contemporary artists have the freedom to create, play, and adjust the project depending on theme or mood. Cadillac asserts that collage is a wonderful tool for learning, because it encourages exploration. As a medium for inspiration, collage can enhance creativity.

Joe Norris recently used the process of collage as a learning tool for himself and his students. He challenged graduate students to synthesize their experiences without using language stating that, "We learn by doing and the reflecting of the doing (Norris, Guercio, & Berry, 1999, p. 1)". Collage creation was experienced differently for each student because communication is not a one-to-one ratio. One person found the process to be a vehicle for self-discovery; another said she could use collage to communicate with others. Norris found the approach fresh and inspirational.

Norris discovered that collage was a valuable process for research because it facilitated meaning making for himself and his students. He asserts that collage would be a useful analytical tool because nonverbal meanings can be explored in new ways and then translated into words. For example, a collage methodology was recently used by John Branch (2001) to study young cola drinkers in Belgium.

Professor Maria Piantanida uses collage when working with gifted children. She has students write about themselves on cardboard triangles. When complete, they arrange the pieces collectively.

> When they come together, we create a large mosaic by students placing their triangle next to someone else's where the visual images suggest a connection. This is all done silently. After all the tiles are in place, they explain what their own tile represents and why they placed it where they did. I'm always amazed at the richness of the tiles and discussions (M. Piantanida, personal communication, October 27, 1999).

Piantanida's story underscores the usefulness of collage for making meaning in both personal and collective settings.

Gluing fabric to paper might simulate a quilt, but the process would not be the same. Quilting takes time: designing, selecting fabrics, cutting, sewing, pressing, layering, quilting and binding. In this sense, patchwork and collage are not parallel activities. Yet quilting can be version of collage when materials and process are considered together.

In the 1950's, American artist Robert Rauschenberg used collage to challenge male icons of painting by adding pieces of junk to the canvas (Wainwright, 1996). By using fabric he magnified the disrespect because cloth was not considered to be a worthy medium for a man. In the 1970's, bolstered by the feminist movement, women's art began making greater strides forward. Judith Brodsky writes,

> The construct of the contemporary woman artist was born: innovator of new imagery and new materials, theorist and writer, involved with the art world – a pedagogue. An air of celebration characterizes the art styles of women artists during that period. (Brodsky, no date, p. 2)

Judy Chicago (1979) used collage to create *The Dinner Party*. Around the same time Miriam Shapiro used collage in her paintings to refer to women, calling her process "femmage" (Brodsky, n.d.; Donnell, 1990).

Femmage is a collage that uses textiles or materials that are traditionally made by women. Donnell (1990) extends the description to include various items that women use in their daily lives. In *Quilts as Women's Art: A Quilt Poetics*, Donnell (1990) combines prose, poetry and quilting in a literary femmage. One might argue that Cathy Miller's (2000) recording of quilt lyrics and music in *One Stitch at a Time* is also femmage. Quilting is femmage because both the medium and the process are archetypal symbols of a feminine tradition.

Three quilt-femmage studies were presented at the 1999 conference of the International Institute of Qualitative Methodology in Edmonton, Canada. Donna Patterson discussed how the senses and metaphor enrich qualitative inquiry. Art educator Christine Truesdale shared the collaborative quilt making techniques and experiences that she used to facilitate conversation, interpretation, and critique for design practices by providing a reflexive intertextual space. Quilting themes such as connectedness and context formed the framework for her research. Karen Polansky used quilt-based inquiry to provide a context in which a group of marginalized women could clarify their values and voice their thoughts about health.

In 1999, Annabelle Solomon used quilting images and processes to develop methodology, structure data and present her master's thesis. Entitled *Between the Worlds: Women Empowering Ourselves through Re-imaging our Spirituality and Creativity*, Solomon used quilting as art and as metaphor. The research consisted of three parts: a series of quilts, a book and the thesis. Solomon described her work as a layered research quilt in which, "…threads of connection and patterns…can be seen woven into each part, forming an overall pattern" (Solomon, 1999, unpublished master's thesis, p. 5). With a collage of materials and processes, Solomon was able to piece data into a research-quilt format that could engage others in dialogue that goes beyond the constructs of language.

Custom Designed Methodology

Parts of all the methodologies I had researched were used, but specifics were determined as information emerged. An open-ended approach was the best way to proceed, but it was tedious, confusing, and frustrating at times. I immersed myself in what I knew of the participant's world, first to get an understanding of the broad issues, then narrowing to specific threads that I followed as far as I could.

Quilting is a form of inquiry; specific skills that are useful for problem-solving. I discovered that concepts I had used on quilt projects like collecting a "stash" and using a "design wall", were used by research participants as well. The research was designed to mimic the quilting process. I used language – stories, conversations and written text – as well as aesthetics. The combination of visual and verbal symbolism along with patchwork techniques became the methodology, and greatly enhanced my understanding.

The information gathered from the participants came primarily from audio-taped interviews, digital photographs of their quilts, and videotaped group sessions of three consecutive weekly quilting sessions. The stash consisted of a broad spectrum of information which was analyzed for research.

At an early stage I thought that the videotapes had little bearing on the study. I was wrong. Video provided images of the non-verbal communication, which helped me better understand context. Dialogue was clear and accurate because at least one of the three recorders would pick up discussions.

Tapes were re-played repeatedly and analyzed from many viewpoints. This was useful to follow an idea or the conversation of individual quilters. Videotape also allowed me to play bee sessions back to back and analyze them as a unit.

Videotaping also had negative aspects. A stationary camera was situated in a corner of the room, and focused on the group while they worked. A mobile camera provided close ups of hand work, specific quilts, and other details, and was operated by one of two university women. The presence of equipment and another person were distracting even though everything was painstakingly professional and ethical.

By the third session, only three quilters attended, and all arrived late. Two admitted they worked at home for a while because they did not want to be videotaped crawling around on the floor pinning quilt layers together. The recording devices created a clinical setting which detracted from the bee's weekly meetings, and inhibited the development of a trusting relationship between researcher and participants.

What seemed to be a problem related solely to the use of video was also related to participant selection. When I began this study I wanted a group of quilters that were "typical" and established, rather than women who did not know each other. An existing bee seemed appropriate. When, as a group, the quilters agreed to participate some individuals seemed reluctant; I thought they were just nervous. I made it clear that they were free to contact me or leave the study at any time, but no one did.

It became clear from the outset that personal boundaries varied immensely, presenting challenges throughout the research. Some women were comfortable discussing virtually anything about quilting, and others were not. Sometimes weeks would pass before I could set aside my frustrations and re-examine findings or contact the participants again. I tried to resolve issues that arose, but efforts to appease had limited success and I was left wondering about the rights of the researcher.

The struggles I faced became the catalyst for deeper understanding. Quilts are emotional conduits otherwise personal boundaries would not have been such a sensitive issue. In addition, I was forced to look beyond words to the quilts themselves; each quilt is a document. When I explored the combination of words and quilts, I got a deeper understanding of each participant. The voices of the quilters and the images of their quilts are equally important to this thesis.

Another issue arose because I wanted the bee sessions to flow "naturally", and let individuals attend and come or go as they chose. Not all participants attended all the group bee sessions which may be satisfactory in a longitudinal study, but in the short term it compromised consistency and quality of findings.

Designing a Research Quilt

The research quilt created by Solomon was one woman's exploration of spirituality through the process and product of quilting. I wanted readers to resonate with my work the same way that I had connected with Solomon's. To this end I looked for a methodology that would stay true to the concept of quilting. Several methodologies had some merit, but the challenge was to maintain "…unity between form and content" (Norris, 1989, p.1). Elliot Eisner explains,

> One of the basic questions scholars are now raising is how we perform the magical feat of transforming the contents of our consciousness into a public form that others can understand. The assumption that the languages of social science – propositional language and number – are the exclusive agents of meaning is becoming increasingly problematic, and as a result, we are exploring the potential of other forms of representation for illuminating the educational worlds we wish to understand (Eisner, 1997, p. 4).

I was reminded that, "Art-based research is a way of constantly returning to the phenomena of our discipline with a desire to find new ways of reflecting upon them" (McNiff, 1998, p. 110). I referred back to the essentials – human ecology and quilting – and wondered how the two could be combined. Human ecology had an academic track record, but quilting – and epistemological process disguised as a woman's hobby – might be challenged. For example, Mary Belenky (1996) once dismissed a women's study group as too "cozy", but later recognized that the sharing of experiences was a form of connected knowing.

Quilting also informs personal knowing. Each one I had sewn was unique – not one turned out as I had envisioned – and each was a learning opportunity. My quilting – and that of others – can be described as an "intact tradition" from which one can derive "strength, wisdom and credibility" (McNiff, 1998, p. 109).

A pieced quilt is comprised of certain basic components: a top, batt, and back are layered to form a "sandwich". Assorted fabrics are sewn together to create an aesthetically pleasing top. This visual artwork has many variations, as the figures in this thesis suggest. Without a pattern an endless number of designs can be created.

Batting made of cotton, polyester or wool is in the middle of the sandwich, and the backing is generally one piece of fabric. The three layers are held together with decorative stitching known as quilting. These stitches, intricate patterns or random designs done by hand or by machine, provide another aesthetic component to enhance the quilt. Binding the raw edges of the layered sandwich together with a thin strip of fabric provides a durable finish. Technically the quilt is now complete, but the creator is encouraged to "sign" the work by sewing a label onto the back. When the finished quilt is revealed, a "show and tell" (a term used at quilt meetings) takes place. At this time the artist may explain the inspiration, theme, purpose, and meaning of the quilt, and what was learned by doing the project.

Patchwork may not change much physically, so it provides a record of a specific point in time. But a quilt can last a century or more, and as people interact with it, it will develop a history. There is potential for this research quilt, or aspects of it, to grow and evolve over time.

The decision to follow a quilt-like process for this research provides a sense of freedom that comes with familiarity and possibility. What would the final creation look like and what would it mean? The project would be a, "Re-vision – the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new direction…" (Adrienne Rich cited in Munhall, 1995, p.185). Conceptually, my research quilt would consist of the same components as a real quilt. Although the outcome could not be predicted, the process – as was evident with each quilt I had ever sewn – could be trusted to provide something of value. This research quilt was an exploration process.

Collecting a Stash

Although still grappling with methodology, time was becoming an issue so I decided to proceed with data collection. Unsure of what I would ultimately use I took a broad approach and documented both individual and collective quilt experiences.

I began to collect data the same way I collect fabric for quilting. That is, to create a "stash" – an assemblage of materials in various colours, values, and textures. Not all fabrics are used in each project, but a variety of choices enhances creativity; the bigger the collection, the more options one has. Songwriter and quilter Cathy

Miller (2000) takes a "tongue in cheek" look at collecting a stash in her song, *100 Ways to Hide Your Stash*,

> Pack it in the wardrobe, under the chair
> Stack it with the linen, with the silverware
> Cram it in the cellar, under the stair
> With the winter clothes, with the underwear.

Most of the stash was specific to the women and their bee. Unable to predict what would be useful, still photographs, and audio-visual records were used to document individual interviews and group sessions. (Appendix C) The stash of resource material also included: personal experience, quilt publications, academic literature, novels, movies, conversations with others, web-based documentation, and music. I gathered anything that would help convey the varied textures of the quilt-making experience.

The stash provided a holistic view of the quilters. The initial exploration of interviews, videotapes, photographs and quilt images became a way to immerse myself in the culture of the quilters. I was open to possibilities and spent considerable time following threads wherever they led.

To get a sense of membership, I created an imaginary relationship between the quilters and myself. As a temporary participant I sensed a connectedness with the group and each individual because I understood the symbolism and experience of quilting. My history as a quilter provided a depth of understanding that an outsider could not have provided. I could maintain my autonomy by stepping back to view the situation as a researcher.

Using a Design Wall

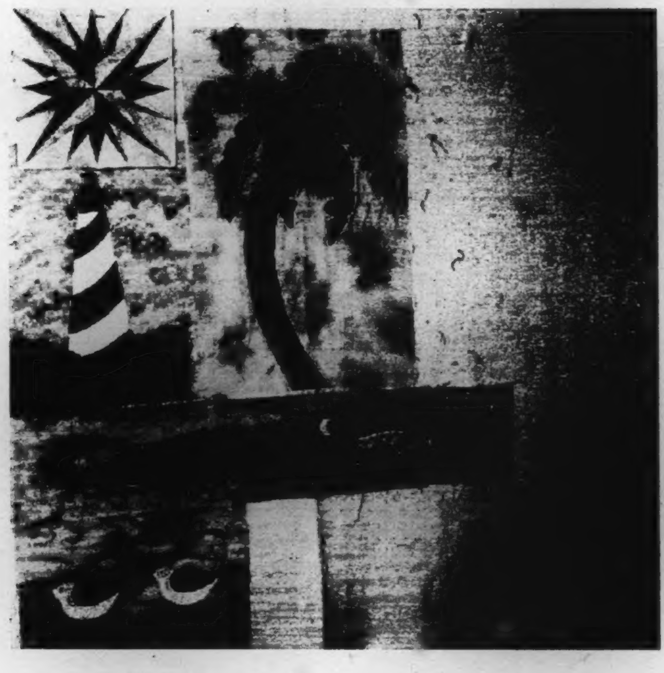
Changing or moving information around was like using a patchworkers "design wall". A design wall usually consists of a large piece of felt-like material (sometimes a fuzzy-backed plastic tablecloth) that has been hung on a wall. Blocks and other components of a quilt in process "stick" to the felt, and can be temporarily adhered, removed, rearranged, and changed before it is sewn together. (Figure 2) To develop the most pleasing design, many quilters first play with ideas, colour, texture and pattern on a design wall. This planning phase is time consuming and challenging. Gail describes the process this way,

> [It] takes a lot of *thought*. It was one of those quilts that you put on a design wall and you arrange [pieces] and you walk away, and you come back the next day. It took a lot of time…[because] it wasn't just "follow the pattern" (I/1A/110).

The quilter will assemble fabrics, audition possibilities, and move pieces around to create the most pleasing design. Becoming immersed in the creative process involves trying new ideas even if they seem unusual. Many quilters challenge themselves to break their routines by experimenting with unfamiliar ideas, patterns or colour choices. There is a continual assessment and questioning of the design, during which time she may ask others for input and seek new materials if necessary. Although a quilt may conjure up feelings of comfort, the creative process often plunges the artist into the discomfiting exploration of the unknown.

The design process is not linear, but recursive and evolutionary. Even when completed, one is often surprised by a quilt; the whole is much more than the sum of its parts. Many intricacies and relationships within the design cannot be planned. Only when one steps back, literally and figuratively, can the quilt be perceived and understood in its entirety.

Figure 2. **Gail's Design Wall**



Virtual Design Wall

The design-wall technique seemed to have potential for doing qualitative research. My experience was that the quilting process would provide exciting, unpredictable, and worthwhile results. The critical question was, "How do I apply patchwork techniques to this research?" When beginning a fabric quilt, the first cut is the most difficult; the routine is familiar, but the future is uncertain. One has to trust the process and just start.

I discovered that there were many possible designs depending upon the choice of (virtual) fabrics and threads. Sharon R. explains, "Like artists in other formats...you work emotionally and intellectually. You work through some ideas and issues as you're working on your quilt (I/1B/37-49)". Sharon R's "go with the flow" advice did not fit with my early understanding of academics, but I decided to risk the process because I sensed value in women's knowing through quilting. The goal was to create a work that resonated with me and hopefully, others.

When I begin a new quilt project I usually need inspiration, so I rummage through my stash of fabrics, books, magazines and other resources I might have. During this open exploration, I intentionally allow my mind to wander in search of ideas, connections, and possibilities. This is also the process I used while exploring the research materials.

After familiarizing myself with the bee, I struggled to make sense of my research quilt by using concepts like "layers" and "stitches". I was encouraged to discover that some of my ideas and concepts fit together, although not always perfectly, nor the first time. As with quilt design, I frequently had to rearrange my thoughts and ideas, and try different approaches.

I analyzed the text in many ways, but something did not feel right. Something was missing, and eventually I realized I had overlooked the quilt images. Neither photos of the participants' quilts nor video taped conversations had been considered for analysis, yet they had been painstakingly collected for the stash.

During the interviews, when a certain quilt was mentioned, I wrote down the name. After each interview, I took digital photos of the quilts that we talked about, as well as others. There were dozens of images that fit with stories, but how could I use them? Hearkening back to Norris's (1989) words regarding the unity of form and content I returned to my research roots: quilting and human ecology. How could visual art be combined with text to provide a holistic view of quilting?

Reflecting back on my research-as-quilt-as-research analogy and thinking about the problem in visual terms, a solution began to appear. I must underscore how visual elements in combination with language, enhanced my problem-solving ability. The proverbial light bulb lit, and illuminated the entire project. Although aspects were not entirely clear, definite shapes of understanding began to emerge from the grey of uncertainty. From my perspective, the research passed the quilting-as-knowing test, but where would it take me?

I decided to modify the nested circles of human ecology theory to suit my needs, and as I did, the model began to look like a quilt block. I took this idea and pushed the edges further until it could be conceptualized as an ecological research quilt model. (Figure 3) The research pattern that emerged on the virtual design wall held considerable promise.

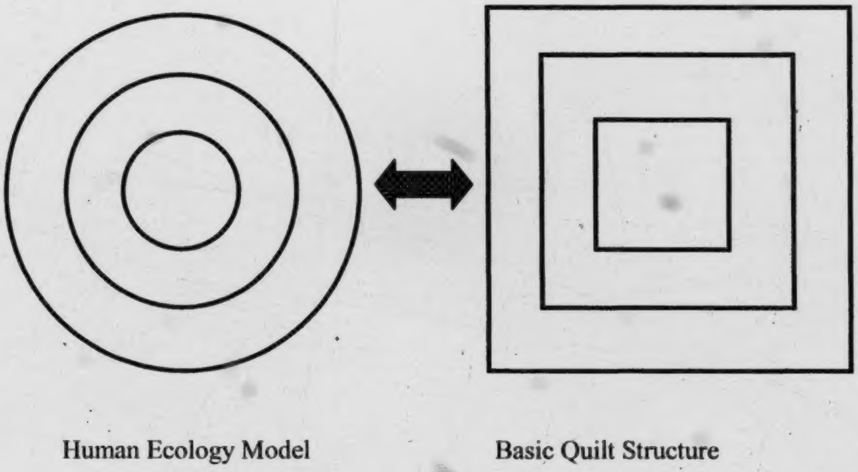


Figure 3. Ecological Research Quilt Model

Virtual Blocks

The basic quilt structure shown above was developed further: into a patchwork top in which each quilter would have her own block. Each block, six in total, would consist of dialogue plus images. As an ad hoc bee member I included a block for myself that coincided with an earlier decision to "opt-in".

There was clearly an aesthetic component to my decision. Without me, there would have been only five blocks, which can be difficult to work with from a design perspective. Mine was the sixth square needed to visually balance the design. In many ways the research would have been awkward without my active participation.

From a philosophical standpoint, I could present a deeper, more personal view of what quilting is and what it means. My own thoughts and feelings represent the innermost circle of the human ecology model: heuristic knowing educed by the quilt-making process. The participant's stories had been filtered because, intentionally or not, they told me what they wanted me to hear and I changed those conversations once again through my interpretation and re-telling. Presenting my thoughts and experiences offered an opportunity to delve into personal meaning without as many filters. Including all my comments could be an entire document in its own right, so clearly much has been left out. As well, much of what I think and do is inaccessible to the conscious mind. Acknowledging this, it became my challenge as researcher-as-seeker, to include excerpts that would not normally have made it past my own internal editor.

Each block began with a loose structure: the quilters' discussion of herself, what I thought of at the time as the "I" stories. Following these were references to immediate family such as children and husbands, then extended family members and friends, and finally broader society. This format mirrored the concentric circles of human ecology theory, and was integral to the research design. (Figure 3.)

After I identified stories and comments that related to human ecology theory, I wanted some feedback, so I gave each quilter the part of her text that I thought I might use. When we gathered, I explained how I had chosen the stories, but some felt they were disjointed and out of context. Since this research was evolutionary – like a quilt, I explained – I could not provide specifics about the direction; I could only speculate about the outcome. I took all comments under advisement and asked them to trust that the process would work out in the final analysis.

The excerpts were temporary and I intended to piece the sections together, with other materials, to form the final research quilt. Like a real quilt, one does not use all the fabric, just sections of it. Sometimes, in order to feature certain designs, pieces are "fussy cut" from the whole cloth. For example, if a particular element is needed for a block, such as an animal, shape or a colour, it can be carefully cut from the fabric. The textual sections I created were fussy cut from interviews, conversations, images and other sources. Lynn Lewis Young writes,

> Figurative imagery, especially in quilts, is frequently too obvious. As content moves from the intended meaning of the artist to the perceived meaning for the viewer, room should be left for the individual to see what they see, to not have all the parts tied up in a neat little bundle.
>
> (In Norton, 2000, p.9)

Like the quilt imagery mentioned above, this research leaves room for interpretation.

Using snippets of interviews is not meant to imply that the quilters are incapable of a full train of thought. This is most definitely not the case, as any conversation with the bee will reveal, but some members expressed concern about how they might be perceived. In retrospect, I should have waited to talk to the participants until I could have explained the research more clearly. But, like a quilt created without a pattern, the exploratory process surprised many of us.

The quilters' own words were used to maintain authenticity that comes from using a primary source. Their stories contain many layers of meaning, the telling of which helps us to understand others and ourselves.

> Women's stories have not been told. And without stories there is no articulation of experience. Without stories a woman is lost when she comes to make the important decisions in her life. She does not learn to value her struggles, to celebrate her strengths, to comprehend her pain. Without stories she cannot understand herself. Without stories she is alienated from those deeper experiences of self and world that have been called spiritual or religious. She is closed in silence. …If

> women's stories are not told, the depth of women's souls will not be known. (Christ, 1980, p.1)

Our conversations helped me to understand and to gain insight into their lives. By engaging the women in conversation I was able to attend to their stories and to "hear deeply" (Daly, 1978, p. 5) what they had to say.

Another challenge was to create a visual component to correspond to the text part of each block, but that would have to wait until the entire research quilt was designed. First I had to imagine what the whole, finished research quilt might look like. Upon review, I had six individual blocks, but this was more than a study about individuals. It was holistic; it was about the bee group and quilting at a broader, societal level.

The blocks were placed to form the center of the research quilt structure. I sketched the idea on paper: two rows of three, aligned vertically, and tentatively added borders. (Figure 4) The drawing looked like a quilt and like the model of human ecology. Using this diagram, the contexts – individual, the bee and society – could be both visually presented and theoretically conceptualized.

It was decided at this point to use only still digital images for the research quilt because it was more like textile fabric than video. Using computer software, it could be cut and manipulated like cloth; video seemed more akin to making movies. The videotapes were useful to review and transcribe group sessions and watch non-verbal communication. At times, both video and audio-tapes were used together to clarify dialogue and understand the context. It was as though I had committed to a particular colour scheme for the research quilt.

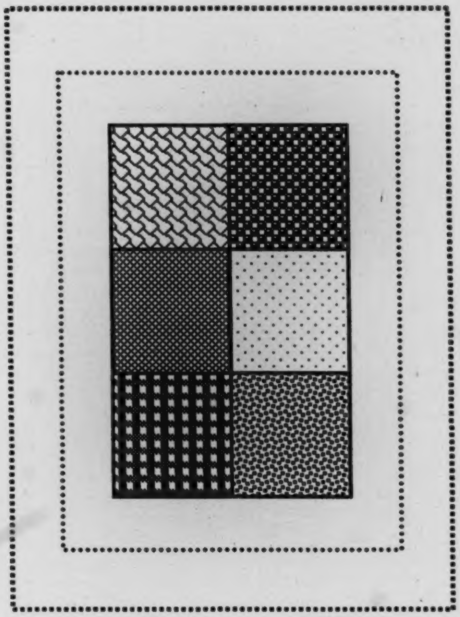


Figure 4. Research Quilt Center Blocks

Virtual Borders

Then I envisioned research quilt borders. (Figure 5) The first is indicated by the light pattern that encompasses the six blocks. It represents the bee and consists of stories and images related to the group. The outermost border – the checkered pattern – became everything quilt related, beyond the individuals and their bee.

The borders provided contexts for the blocks and maintained the quilt-like structure. As well, it looked like a variation of the nested circles' model of human ecology theory. One advantage was the inclusion of more than one unit at the centre, which seemed a limitation of the original model. Originally intended for family studies, the innermost circle generally represented one family unit (Bubolz and Sontag, 1993). The quilt-like model of multiple units – or blocks – offered more potential because the idea of individuals as part of a community was already integrated into the concept.

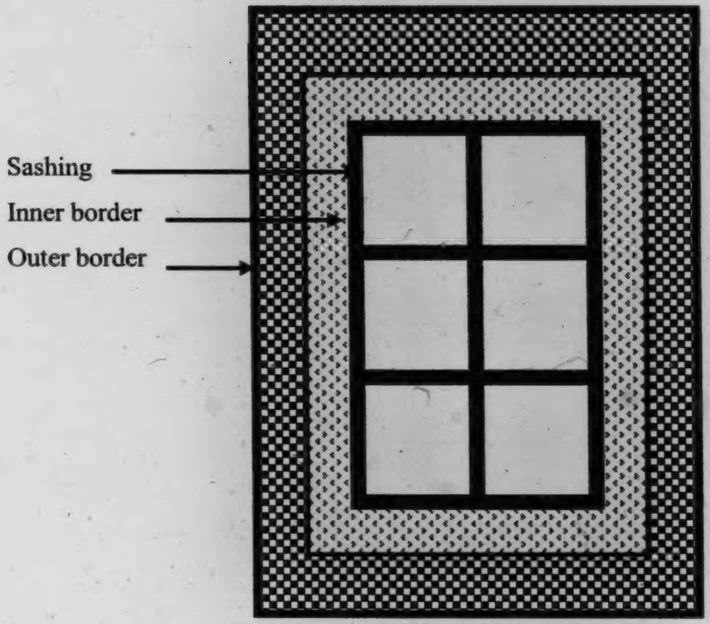


Figure 5. Research Quilt Borders

Sashing

Assessing the research at this point revealed that one aspect of the holistic quilt model was missing – a way to represent the interrelationships between the components. In a two dimensional model, as with an actual quilt, borders and seams are clear demarcations between sections. Although presented as encapsulated units, they are not. I needed to find a way to represent interrelationships both visually and textually.

According to human ecology theory, all blocks and borders are permeable. Like diaphanous fabric, the borders are dynamic and permeable to individuals and knowledge. A change in one may cause change in another – or all – sections. For example, my presence as a quilter and researcher in the bee changed the context and experience of individuals and the group. It did not appear to alter the general quilt population. How could I change the quilt model to better represent the interrelationships between sections?

To ease the interview process, I had asked each quilter to show me a "touchstone" quilt – one she felt was particularly meaningful. Sharon H. immediately identified her "Grandma's Lace" quilt, but others were not quite as decided. Gail explained, "I don't have *a* quilt, I have *lots* of quilts that are important for various reasons" (I/1A/47).

Although a touchstone quilt was not defined at the beginning, during our conversations each woman spoke of at least one pivotal experience or object. I thought of these experiences as conduits of knowledge, each somehow distinct from the others. Each example needed to be set apart from the rest of our conversation. To this point I had six "blocks" of dialogue but how could I feature the unique pieces?

The touchstone stories and images became sashing, which consists of strips of fabric that is sewn to each block and separates it from the others. Thick dark lines around each block in Figure 6 represent the sashing. The sashing is identified in each block image, as well as at the end of each woman's written block.

> So I took these [patchwork stars] home and I appliquéd them onto some muslin squares. I had *no* idea what I was doing. Then I phoned my mom and I said, 'Okay, now what do I do?' and she said, 'Well, you put some borders, some strips – now I know is sashing – between them' (Gail, I/1A/10).

The patchwork that I felt was the most meaningful to each quilter would be the sashing for her block. It was critical that story that corresponded to the visual image held some important event, experience or meaning for the participant. I wanted to convey how this particular quilt enhanced the woman's life in some way.

Figure 6 represents the top layer of the research quilt: blocks with sashing, inner border and outer border. Together, the components provide a visual design to structure this research.

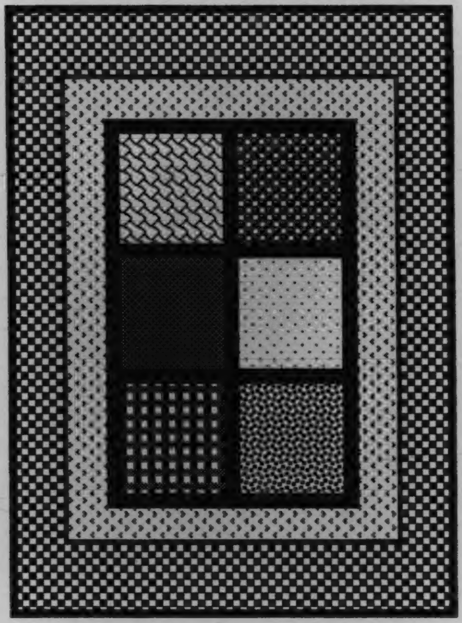


Figure 6. Research Quilt Model

Creating Layers: Virtual Top, Batt and Back

Before they were sewn together, the three main components of patchwork – top, batt and back – were referred to as the "sandwich". My research quilt was layered like a fabric quilt. In both cases, the top was visual piecework. The middle layer, represented by the quilters' words, was like cotton batt or batting that provided depth. The theory of human ecology as mentioned earlier was the backing. At this early stage of research, the virtual sandwich consisted of the top (visual quilt), the batt (text) and backing (theory).

I began the pieced top by creating the blocks. In most cases I used the sashing image for the background, and then put four examples of the quilters' work on top, like a central medallion. I chose the initial sashing image for each block because it represented a change or transitional period in the quilter's life. As I assembled each block, I was mindful of the balance between aesthetics and accurate representation but adhered more closely to principles of design.

When I assembled the independently created six blocks for the first time, two did not fit aesthetically with the other four. They were noticeably brighter and distracted from the overall effect. Selecting alternative images for these sashings was not a problem because all participants had at least two quilts that represented significant changes in their lives. The block-making process, the sashing in particular, forced me to observe, think, and intuit carefully, which deepened my understanding of the bee and each member.

The borders were images of quilts that represented both the bee and quilt culture. For the innermost border I chose the bee's *Gift of the Magi* quilt. (Figure 7) This quilt, which was donated to charity, was designed and sewn collaboratively by members of the group. The outer border is a repetition of a photo of the AIDS Memorial quilt displayed on the lawn in front of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. (Figure 8) The memorial quilt is significant because of the global impact it had on AIDS awareness.

The text, or batting, for each block provided details and depth. I compiled text the same way as I chose quilt images: meaningful stories, descriptions, and quotes that related to each block and each border. I chose the borders and sashing images primarily because of the meaning attached to that image. For example, the *Gift of the Magi* (Figure 7) was the most recent quilt the bee had created together, so it represented the most current and sensitive topic. Although not a new issue, the AIDS Memorial quilt (Figure 8) had arguably the most global impact. When words were combined with each visual block, my own understanding deepened as I chased hunches, made connections and uncovered relationships. I recognized the sense of excitement I feel when I work on an actual quilt design.

> Many of us have had the experience of seeing such a work of [quilt] art. Though we may appreciate the technique or the innovation behind it, our first response comes not through intellect but straight from our hearts and our souls. The story behind the piece sometimes sets the stage for our reaction; maybe we identify with the notion or idea that inspired the maker to create the work. At other times, the reason for our reaction is less clear – all we know is that we have to keep looking. Something in the image makes us say "Wow!" An aspect of it awakens a part of us that we may be surprised to find was there. (Norton, 2000, p. 7)

Figure 7. ***Gift of the Magi***
Created 2001 by the Bee

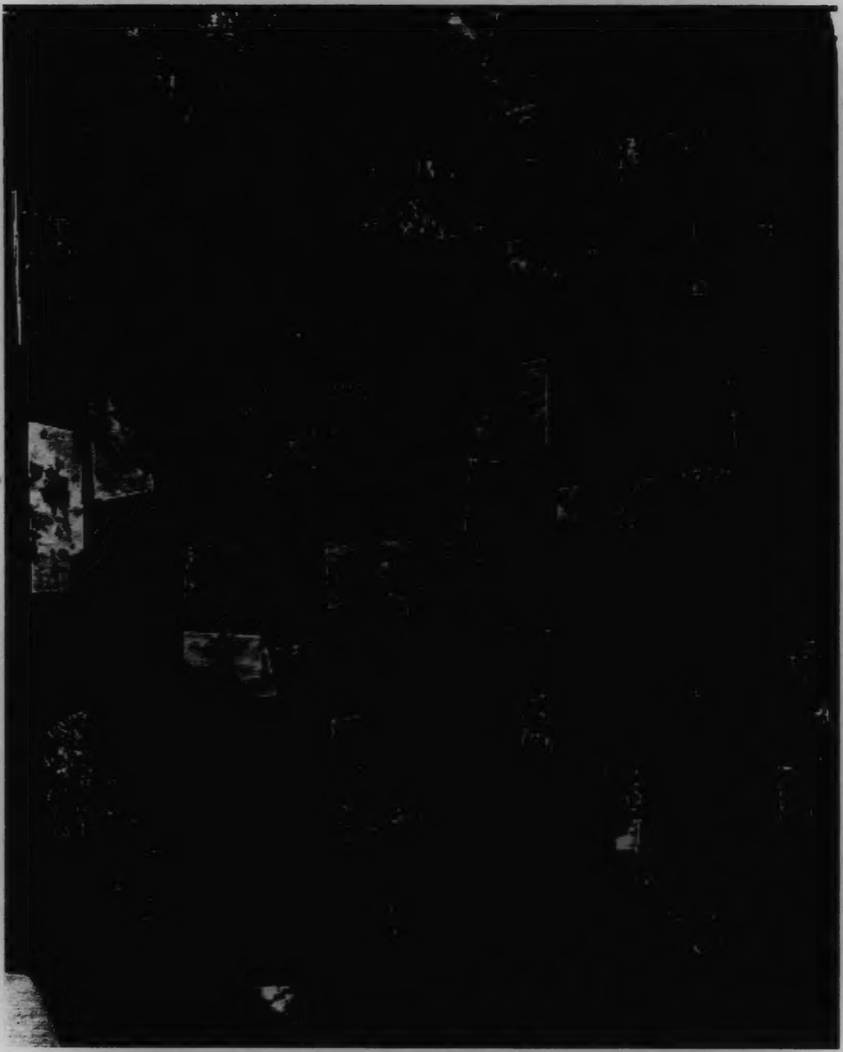
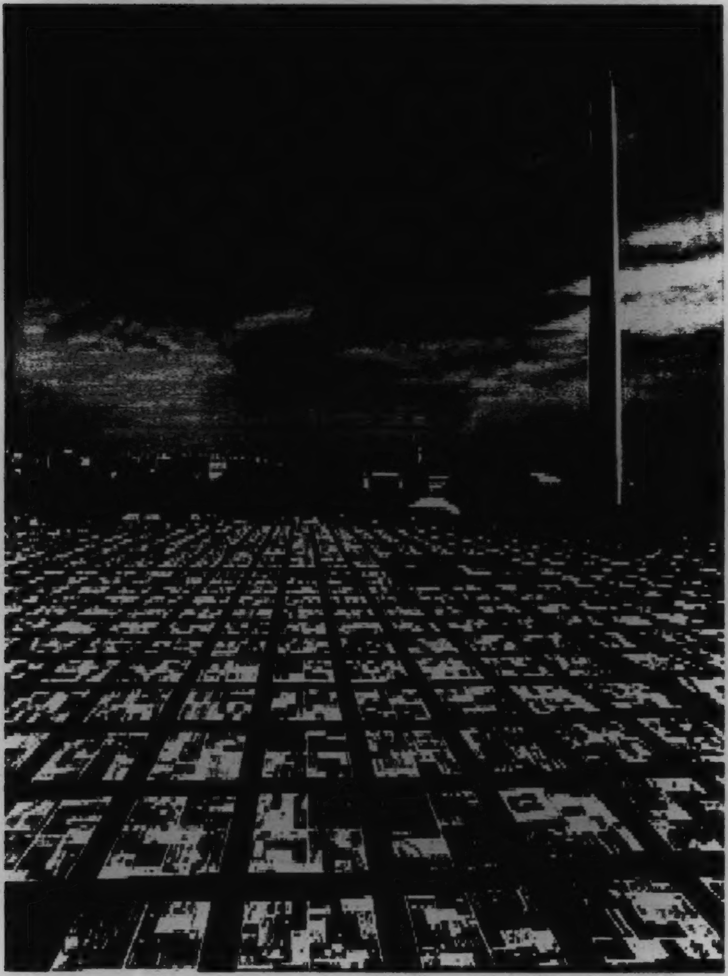


Figure 8 **The NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt**

(www.aidsquilt.org, retrieved October 5, 2001)



Reviewing the Plan

> Even though I haven't written heaps yet, I feel as though it's all just sitting there like fragments of fabric waiting to be pieced together in a way that expresses my philosophy, not necessarily that of the institution.
>
> (A. Solomon, personal communication, February 2, 2001)

When I began this research, I recognized a similarity between some approaches to qualitative research and quilting. Both strive to create meaning by collecting a broad range of materials and techniques, reflecting on design, collaborating with others, selecting, arranging and re-arranging sections in meaningful ways. For example, collecting data and looking for patterns, selecting pieces and moving them around – contrasting and comparing one to another. How did a certain piece of information (or fabric) look next to other pieces? How did the presence of one bit of data relate to the whole piece? Did it change depending on the context?

Quilting seemed to be a combination of Pratt's (nd) "ecology of knowing" and Taylor's (nd) "feminine epistemology", a shared symbolic system created and maintained primarily by women. Within this system, female experiences, the creative process of quilting, and communication through art and language are intertwined. Gilligan (1998) states, "…the way people talk about their lives is of significance, that the language they use and the connections they make reveal the world that they see and in which they act" (p. 2).

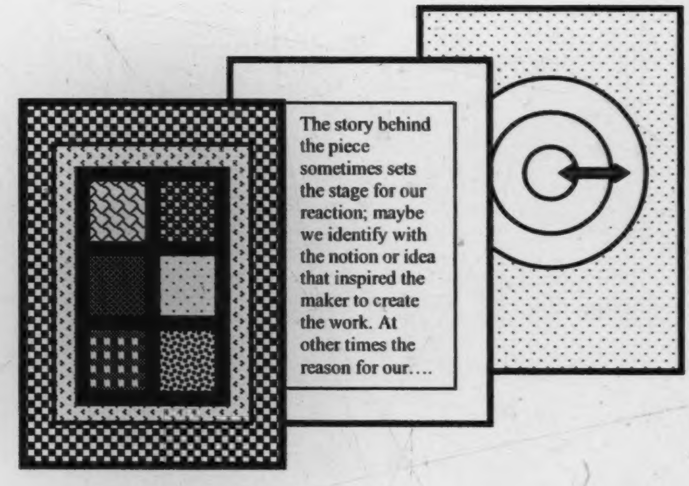
Conceptualizing this research required two things: materials representative of quilters such as interviews and their patchwork, and an authentic quilt-inspired approach. In the forward to *Women's Ways of Knowing*, Anne Stanton explains the importance of listening to participants,

> Rather than imposing theories about cognition, the authors begin with their women respondents, listening carefully to how they define

> powerful learning experiences and go about gathering knowledge
> and making meaning. (In Belenky et al., 1986, p. 27)

This study was created using patchwork sensibilities and related tacit knowledge. Images, stories, processes, and aesthetics were used purposefully and intuitively. Analysis occurred in an on-going, recursive fashion. Choices were made depending on what was deemed to be the best, given the situation.

Like a quilt, this research has dimension and depth. (Figure 9) Human ecology theory provides a holistic backing, and the patchwork top is a concentric collage of visual art. The center is the language-based layer that adds depth and meaning. Together, these layers form a research quilt sandwich that is contextual, broadly based, and backed by holistic theory.



The story behind the piece sometimes sets the stage for our reaction; maybe we identify with the notion or idea that inspired the maker to create the work. At other times the reason for our....

Figure 9. Layered Research Quilt

> ...both the finished quilt and the processes of its making have been seen as sources of empowering metaphors that suggest distinctively female patterns of thought and activity. Yet the imaginative and emotional power that quilts exert has still not been fully explored or explained.
>
> (Elaine Hedges, in Donnell, 1990, p. ix)

Generations of women quilted, and even though it is no longer necessary to sew bedding, interest in patchwork continues to flourish. The enduring history of quilting suggested that the activity was a positive experience. The culture reflected many traditionally feminine characteristics such as care, collaboration and community. There appeared to be enhanced communication, relationships, and an overall sense of well-being.

This research contains the words and images of women quilters stitched together, to create a virtual quilt that explored the question, "Why quilt?" Human ecology's environmental model provided a framework that allowed a holistic, open-ended approach rather than a prescribed template. The research, at this early stage, was still evolving; the art-based approach facilitated responses to new ideas and resources.

Information for this study had one important source – quilters. Variations included interviews, discussions, academic literature, personal journals, anecdotes, music, magazines, and quilts. The information informed the direction of this study as it emerged, and the process evolved. The purpose is to present an authentic representation of a group of quilters within their current culture.

This research quilt was designed to engage the imagination. Readers participate by bringing their own perceptions and knowledge to the experience; like a quilt, this document will speak to each person differently. It will be up to each reader to fabric-ate meaning.

Virtual Quilt Components

This section contains the components of the virtual quilt created during the research process. They include six blocks with sashing (one for each participant), two borders, quilting and binding. Blocks and borders are presented in two ways: words and image. The quilting and binding use only language.

It is not uncommon for quilters to combine words and fabric. One can find several examples in the book *One Quilt, One Moment: Quilts that Change Lives* (Norton, 2000), including *Omom! 1998* (Brown), *Great Women* (Schulze), *Raging Light* (Gray) and *Driving with Mary* (Huhn).

To set the tone for the quilt, I chose to begin with my own block. The others follow in alphabetical order. Each participant has a block section that begins with a collage I created from images of her quilts. The central motif is made up of four quilt images, and is surrounded by sashing. The sashing is both an image and a story about quilting that I felt was unique to each woman; an experience that caused her to re-examine an aspect of her being. Sashing reinforces her individuality and connects her to the others represented in the virtual quilt.

Stories and excerpts of conversations particular to the woman it represents follow each virtual block. Examples of quilters' art are found at the end like a "show and tell" presentation. These images provide further visual information about each woman and are to be interpreted by the reader.

The text is a patchwork. The bits and pieces are intentionally assembled; they are not a continuous story line. The patchwork format comes from the idea that boundaries are blurred, dynamic and interrelated. The reader will find many overlapping examples both within each block and between blocks and borders. Like most visual quilts, one must often spend a few minutes exploring and reflecting on the content. As diarist Anais Nin explains, "There is not one big cosmic meaning for all. There is only the meaning we all give to our lives, an individual meaning" (In Brussat & Brussat, 1996, p. 297).

Presentation of the text roughly follows statements referring to the woman herself and how she began quilting. The stories gradually include others such as family and friends, which is based on the concentric circles of human ecology theory.

The inner border represents the group or bee to which these women belong. I began with the image and then the words of the quilters, again in a patchwork format. The outer border is similar to what has just been described, except it represents quilt culture in the broadest sense.

As with fabric patchwork, once the three layers have been assembled, it must be quilted or sewn together. Quilting is not done until the end of the project when one can see what options exist to enhance the overall design.

> I know what I basically want to do with [Nana's Garden], but won't [quilt] it until I can visualize it finished. I can think of several [possibilities]. The one I'm leaning to – just to get it finished – is just to sew lines from corner to corner, but I don't want to do that. (Ellen I/2A/224)

Quilting has two purposes – to strengthen the entire piece, and to create another decorative element. The stitching can be simple or ornate; it is always functional. My analysis is the quilting in this virtual quilt.

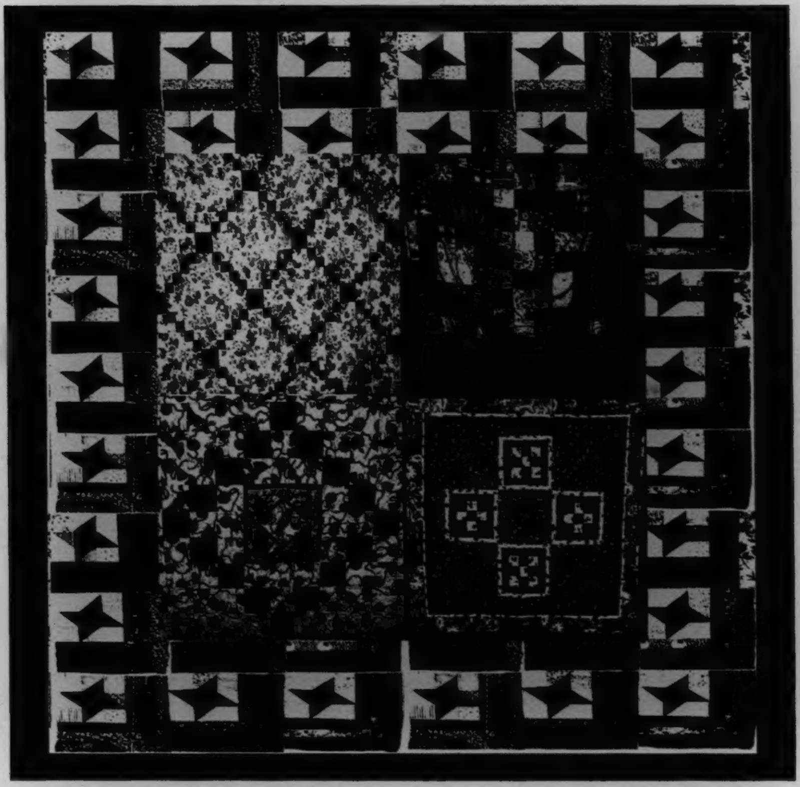
> I like to examine the back of a quilt where the stitching shows. Independent of the pattern and colour of the top, the threads create their own story: they scroll and cross persistently. Like tiny arms they hug the layers close. The beauty of the stitching belies their importance but they are required for the integrity of the quilt over time.
>
> (Peggy, November 1999)

Quilting thread is chosen based on strength and colour. The thread for this research quilt is the original question, "Why quilt?" The strength of the question is based on the ability to draw this theme through all layers and materials of the thesis. The question should relate to everyone in the study. The thread colour is variegated, meaning there are changes and nuances that reflect elements of the quilt. In other words, reasons why I quilt may be similar to Ellen's, but very different from Faye's. The point is that while shades of reasons vary, I have connected the quilters in this research with the same thread.

I used the imaginary "Why quilt?" thread to stitch my analysis through each section of the virtual quilt. The discussion, quotes, and images of each quilters work punctuate the virtual blocks and borders like meandering or scrolling stitches. Scrolling means to sew free-motion designs to enhance particular areas and connect one design element to another. As with conventional quilting, this has been done to strengthen and enhance the patterns that emerged from the virtual quilt. Analysis' found throughout the sections reinforce the holistic concepts of permeability and interrelationships.

The last piece of quilt construction is the binding. This involves attaching a finished piece of fabric to secure and cover raw edges. Binding reinforces the quilt so it will not fray. More about binding is found in a later section.

Figure 10. **Peggy's Virtual Block**



"Quilting always brings you back - sort of inward - and you can reflect…."
Peggy

The idea of subtitling my quilts with words frightens me. It reveals too much in a way that others can understand. It exposes my essence to scrutiny and judgement; I feel vulnerable. I prefer to wrap myself in the silent protection of a quilt cocoon. I wonder if the research participants will feel like the request is an invasion of privacy? (Peggy's notes, November 1999)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Peggy (to Faye): "What I find interesting too is…the way you're thinking about [your ideas] and [at the same time] seeing what other people are doing. But [quilting] always brings you back – sort of inward. And you can reflect on, 'Who am I' and, 'What is this doing for me' and, 'How am I best suited to the quilting'. (Faye I/1A/176-185) (Figure 10)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

I made my first quilt in 1971. My grade eight Home Economics teacher told us the purpose of the project was to practice sewing straight seams. I remember looking forward to the challenge; it sounded like fun.

Quilting provided an opportunity to work cooperatively with the other girls in my class. (This was in the days before boys were allowed to take Home Economics.) We swapped scraps of fabric, ideas and stories. Collaborating this way was new to me because I was shy and often worked alone.

With this quilt I pieced together my own scraps and new scraps from friends; familiar memories were stitched to new experiences. My quilt represented new knowledge and understanding that I had not had before. I cannot remember details about what I learned, but the essence of the experience stayed with me. (Figure 12)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

> Re-vision - the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new direction.
>
> (Adrienne Rich in Munhall, 1995, p.185).

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

I made quilts for my two eldest children on their thirteenth birthdays to commemorate their passage out of childhood and into adolescence. (My youngest is only eleven.) I also want to convey my feelings of love for them as they travel through these often turbulent years. A quilt is a tangible symbol of comfort, warmth and security. These are feelings I want to pass on to them even though they may not want me with them at moments when they feel sad, lonely or troubled. Their birthday quilts allows my children to have a subtle symbol of Mom and at the same time retain their growing sense of independence. I feel like I'm still offering nurturing and comfort when I see them snuggled up with their quilts. (Figure 13)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

My dad was 46 when he got cancer. I was 21, a recent university graduate and newly married. My life was great. Now this. His illness was such a threat. One day, my dad's mother brought him a new quilt to use while he fought the disease. It was whole cloth - not pieces - filled with wool batting in the German tradition, and hand quilted. The pale blue satin glowed in lamplight.

I was surprised to see this quilt. It was unlike the ones that she'd given my sister and me. Most of Omi's efforts went into brightly coloured 'crazy quilts'; garage sale scraps of 1970's fortrel zigzagged together. They covered old chairs, car seats and were stacked on tables to sell at the church bazaar.

The blue satin quilt was beautiful and unusual, not something I had ever known Omi to make. I believe it was a symbol of a mother's love for her son; an expression of hope made visible. (Figures 14a; 14b)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Peggy's Journal – November 25, 2000

I just heard that my cousin Sandi has breast cancer. She's 37. It looks so strange seeing this in print. Even though I'm supposed to be writing about quilt research, I am driven, compelled, guided into sewing a quilt for Sandi. I can do both.

I get a sense that although most things are out of my control, I can do this to make Sandi and her family, feel better. She needs something to comfort her during her recovery. Something pretty, warm, and soft. The quilt will be something to cry into, something to hug, something to pound on, something to yell into.

The quilt will be sewn from a soft, feminine floral print of pink roses, green leaves and a white background...It's very 'country', and very Sandi. I'll sew it into a single Irish chain pattern using a deep green geometric to contrast the floral.

I can't imagine what will happen if the cancer claims her. It's too painful to think about; my chest feels solid and I can barely breathe. My wish is that Sandi can have it somewhere special for many more decades. There'll be 'hope' in that quilt; a talisman for health.

The hope is for me too, I suppose. I'm going to stitch my feelings into that quilt and in doing so, work it out in my head and my heart. I'll try to reconcile my thoughts with actions and come to some kind of an understanding about Sandi, her illness, our relationship and what all this "means".

November 26

I need to sew to give me time to reflect on Sandi and what this means. She's the youngest of five granddaughters, yet the first one struck with this disease. The only family member that had breast cancer was grandmother's sister - no aunts or other female relatives.

I don't want the quilt to have sad memories…I want it to reflect the joy around us even though times get rough. I want Sandi to look back at the quilt and think of it has having been helpful. I want it to represent our connection and strength as a family.

My mom-in-law understood why I had to make a quilt for Sandi. It's just something quilter's do if at all possible, and other quilter's support that gesture. It's like all these quilters and their lives are being pieced together to form a whole. All the good and the bad, all the beautiful and the tragic, all our ups and our downs, are combined into our quilts.

I think the quilt is a tool with which Sandi may be able to grasp the essence of what connects us as a family. The quilt is tangible proof of all that existed before the illness, and what will be there when it's all over. I hope she'll be able to grab on to it and in doing so, hold close all of us who love her and want her to get better.

November 27

Today I pieced the back, sandwiched the three layers, quilted it all and just about finished binding it. I'm bug-eyed again. A double-sided quilt in forty eight hours. That's a lot of sewing, but it's worth it. I've named the quilt *Rose Garden*. It's kind of an ironic name, because I think of the saying, "I never promised you a rose garden", but then here's this quilt. I never promised Sandi a "rose garden", but she'll get one anyway.

Years ago I accepted the possibility that one may not go through life with all fully functioning body parts. It's kind of like a 'zinger' in quilting. Zinger refers to a bit of unexpected colour that jazzes up the quilt, giving it a surprising but pleasant twist. Life throws us zingers, some more jazzy than others. They just make the rest of life's patterns look better by comparison. (Figures 15a; 15b)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

I entered two quilts in the University's 2001 graduate student art design competition: *Rose Garden* and *Daily Celebrations*. I admit that they looked striking displayed from the second floor railing in the Timms Centre lobby. They look different from a distance. Soft fabric patterns against reflective chrome and glass. I could hardly believe they were mine. *Daily Celebrations* won first place in the competition. (Figures 16a; 16b)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Sashing

Peggy: "I made all these half square triangles – scrappy ones. Basically just light and dark values, and I'm finding that they're really, really tiny. (Laughter) 'Cause they're scraps, right?

Ellen: "Well, you should be talking to your mother-in-law. She's the one who always says we throw away pieces that are too big."

Peggy: "And I used her scraps right. So that's why they're so tiny. So now what do I do?"

Gail: "Well, put them on a design wall and …arrange [them]."

Peggy: "I did that actually, but…it was just so much work with these little bitty things. What I was thinking of is doing…flying geese and then larger squares of a solid, one-colour so I don't have to use all these itty-bitty…squares. …But they looked so cute!"

Ellen: (Laughs) "Yes…ask Sharon how she liked doing her two thousand squares." (G3/AT/1B/224-239)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Peggy: (playing with half-square triangles) "Oh this looks like a dog's breakfast. What else can I do with this?"

Sharon: "You can make friendship stars, but you'd need a square."

Peggy: "Yeah…I was thinking I would do a square…."

Sharon: "For the friendship square you'd need a square in the middle and then four corner squares."

Peggy: "Like this kind of thing…and there's a square in the middle?"

Ellen: "There's a square here (re-arranges) and these go…[here]."

Peggy: "…Oh, a little tiny square, this size! Great! (Moving pieces) Why isn't this right?"

Ellen: "You need a book."

Peggy: "There. Yeah… Squint at it. …Actually, I still want an even larger one. I was thinking I would do…what's that other star called? Like the wall-hanging I just finished…it's a star too. "

Sharon: "The Ohio star?"

Peggy: "The Ohio star…I could do that and then…I'd have a bigger square in the middle, right?" (Keeps playing). (G3/AT/1B/324-349)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Ellen: “I like the friendship star.”

Peggy: “Do you? Why?”

Ellen: “I don't know. I just do. That’s [the design of] another one of my [unfinished] quilts downstairs…When I go to a UFO weekend, I never take those.”

Gail: “Yeah. You take something new (Smiles, because she does the same thing.).” (G3/AT/1B/376-383)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Peggy: (Still playing with half-square triangles.) “There’s a pattern I like - the Flying Geese with strips in between. It’s kind of cute.”

Ellen: (Looking over) “Um Hmm.”

Sharon: “There’s one over in Lori’s that they have alternated the light and dark, so that you get a zigzag thing - a light one and a dark one (showing with her hands).”

Peggy: “The other thing that this reminds me of are those ‘Feathered stars’.”

Ellen: “Oh yeah. That’s one thing I would like to do.”

(G3/AT/1B/558-572)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

My sashing is a virtual quilt. (Figure 17) Only nine small blocks adhered to a design wall actually exist. Each is a friendship star and log cabin variation. (Figure 17a & 17b)

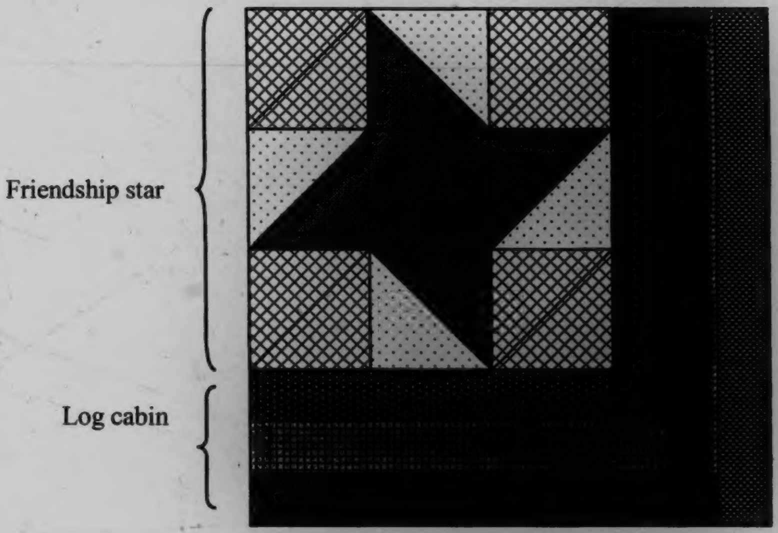


Figure 17a. Friendship Star Log Cabin Diagram

Friendship stars represent all the quilters and friends who facilitated my research. The log cabin strips symbolize my family and their support. The quilt is virtually stitched together, and represents a unified community of support. The fabrics are scraps from other projects and repeat the theme of individuals in unity.

Because it is unfinished, this patchwork also represents possibilities. I can still add to the blocks: change the pattern, find new elements, expand, reflect and rearrange. At this moment the blocks are a work in progress – they represent a future of creative discovery.

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

This was the most challenging block to create because I had to find deeper meanings than I normally do when I quilt. It seems easier to step back and analyze other peoples' quilts, words and actions. Heuristic reflection allowed me to get insights about quilting other than those I could get from other people.

I quilt for several reasons. I have a need to create and to be challenged in the process. Working with elements of design such as colour, pattern, and texture is thought provoking because alternatives and possibilities are limitless. When I quilt, it is important that I make the piece artistically pleasing. The standards I set are personal, although they are based on fundamental design principles.

The bee speculated that I did not make quilts from patterns because I did not like to follow instructions. Upon reflection, I realized my quilting choices reflect my stubborn independence. For example, I have never purchased a pattern for a quilt. My skills are limited so I select simple designs, often from a book or magazine, but choose to work with unusual colour and texture. I like to take design risks, since consequences of failure are not dire. Only one pieced top did not work, and it is hidden in a cupboard; no one has seen it. I expect that when I develop more skills it might be salvaged.

My environment is very important; it must be uncluttered and visually appealing. I can deal with messiness for a time, but often feel compelled to tidy and organize. My quilts reflect this too because most of them are geometric. They are always securely sewn and threads are clipped. I expect they will be treated with care and respect, much like I want to be treated.

Despite my propensity for order, the creative process allows me to think expansively. My challenge is to “get out of my head” and get in touch with feelings. I have found this possible through quilt play. I allow my imagination to wander when I quilt which allows psychological space to rest. Schedules and concerns are temporarily forgotten, which provides a feeling of freedom. Quilting allows me to step away from adult responsibilities for a time.

Playing with patchwork helps me see problems in different contexts, just as I see colours and textures differently when they are moved around on the design wall. The ability to solve problems seems to be enhanced when I quilt because I give myself permission to explore physical, intellectual and intuitive resources.

Quilting allows me to set personal challenges, derive a sense of accomplishment, and maintain social connections. I have not been involved with quilt groups per se, but through research and other friendships I have met many people. I have used quilting to initiate conversations. My quilts have been given to friends and family members, which strengthens my relationships. Figures 11 and 17 to 23 are examples of some of my quilts.

I expected that doing this study would provide me with structure, but that was not the case. I wanted a pattern to follow – a research template to trace. I expected that following a quilt-like method would work, but I was required to put a lot of faith in the process. No specific quilting pattern meant trusting that the process would unfold and evolve, as does patchwork. This felt uncomfortable because I had learned to distrust my intuitive and visual senses. My commitment to create a research quilt forced me to re-think how I know the world by trusting my artistic sensibilities at least as much as my intellectual process.

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^--

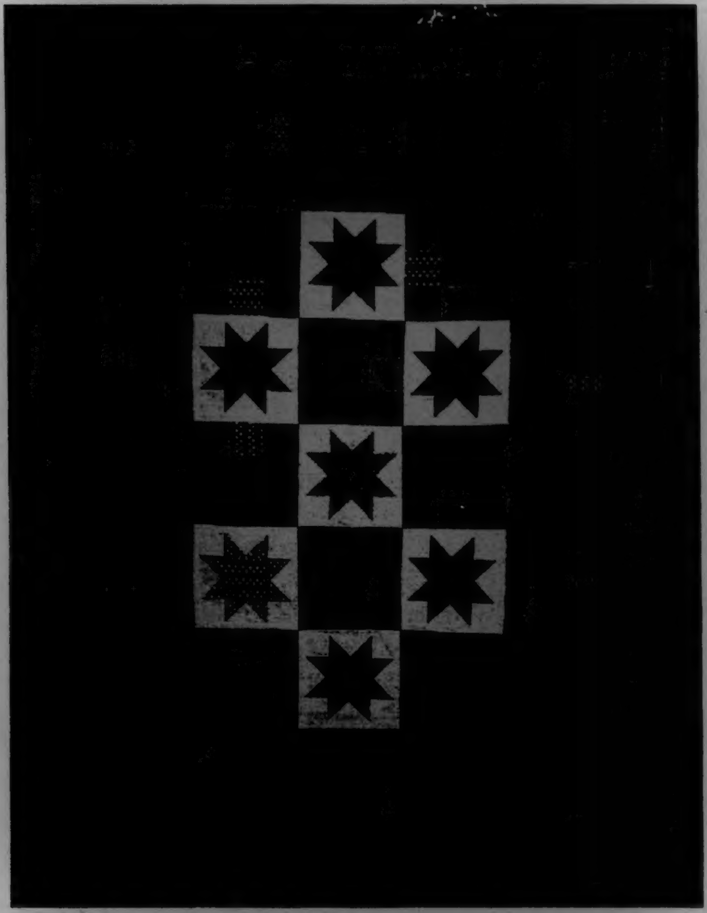


Figure 11. Country Line Dance

Figure 12. First Quilt

Figure 13. Lucky Thirteen

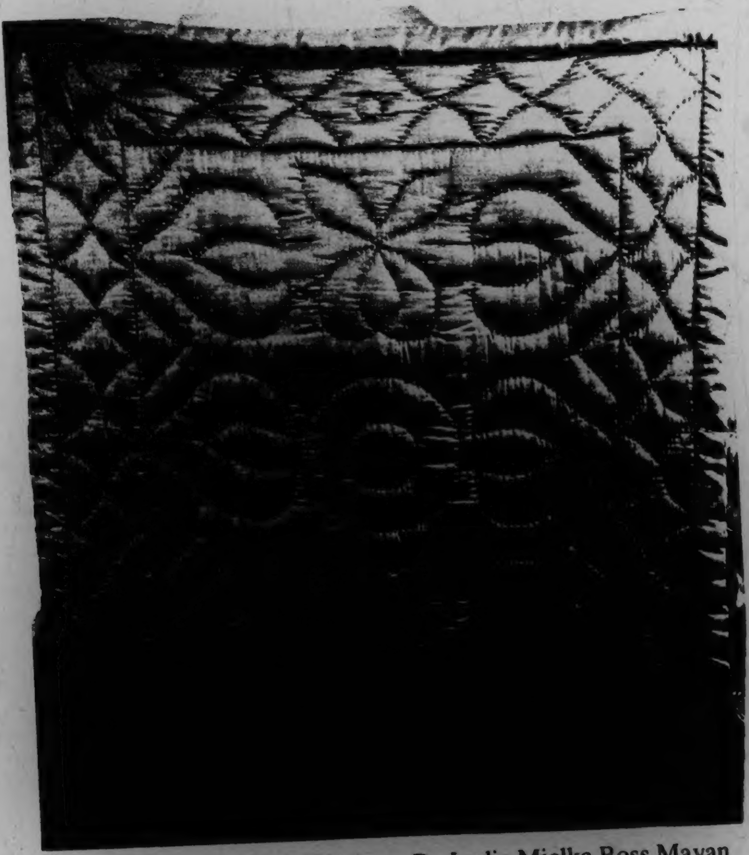


Figure 14a. Blue Satin Wishes - By Lydia Mielke Boss Mayan

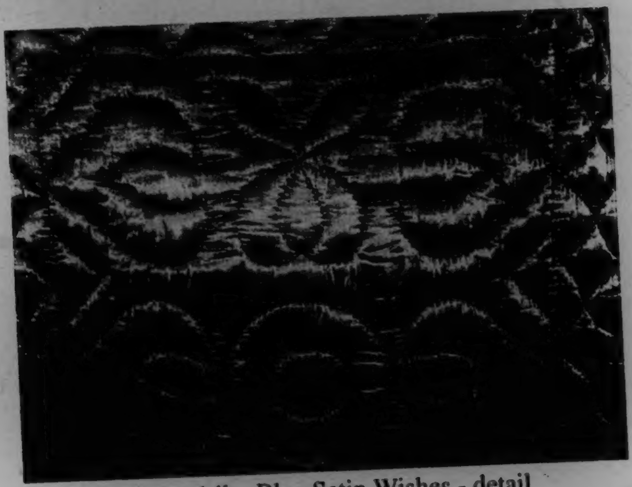


Figure 14b. Blue Satin Wishes - detail

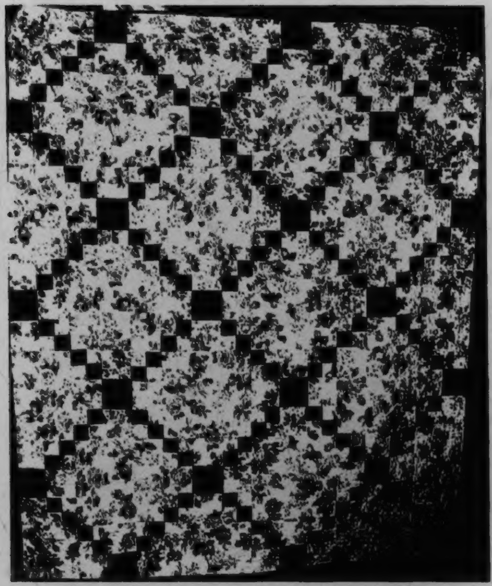


Figure 15a. Rose Garden - front

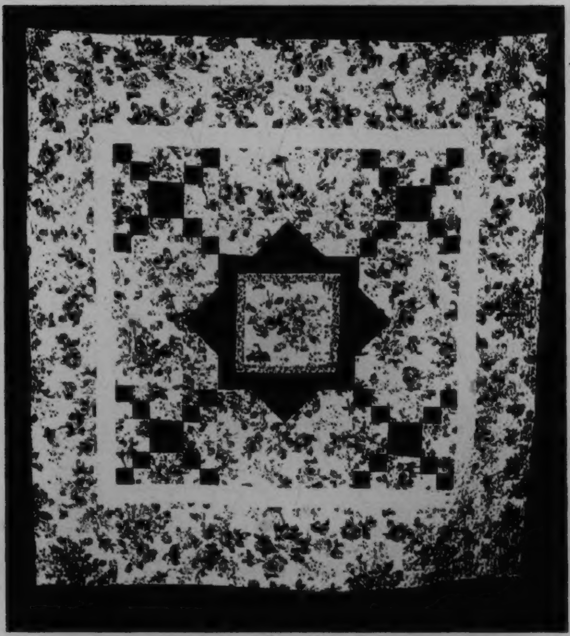


Figure 15b. Rose Garden - back

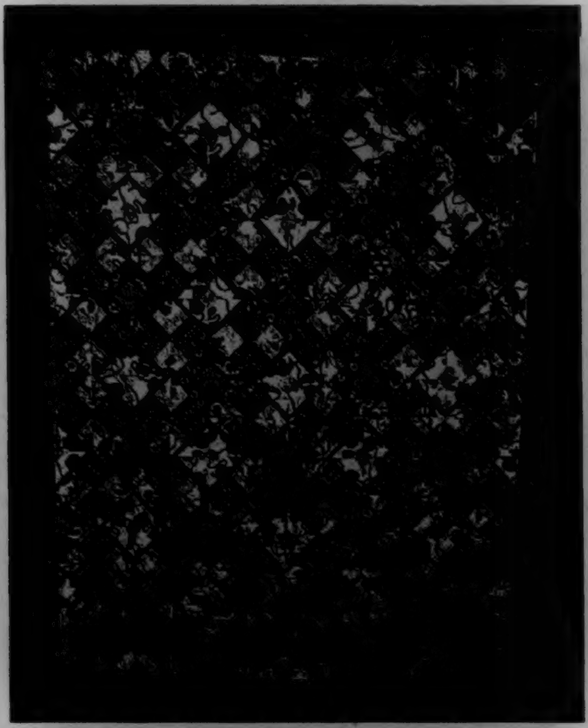


Figure 16a. Daily Celebrations - front

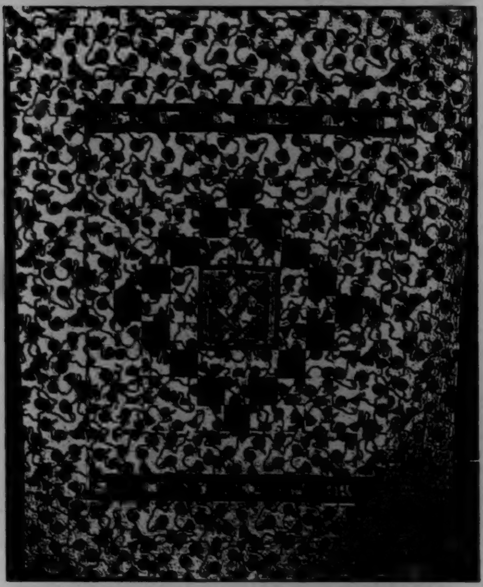


Figure 16b. Daily Celebrations - back

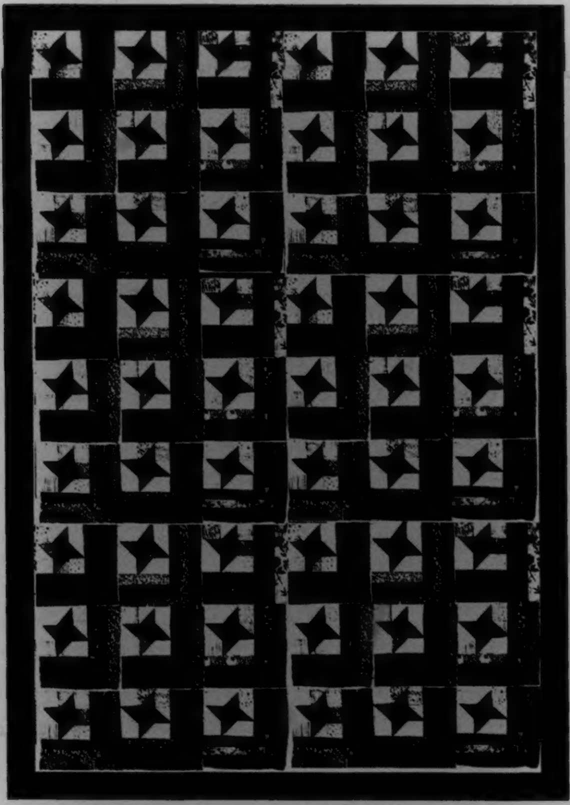


Figure 17. Virtual Friendship Star Log Cabin Virtual Quilt

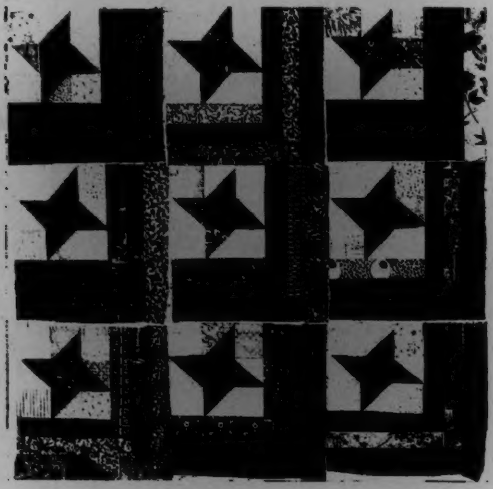


Figure 17b. Friendship Star Log Cabin Fabric Blocks

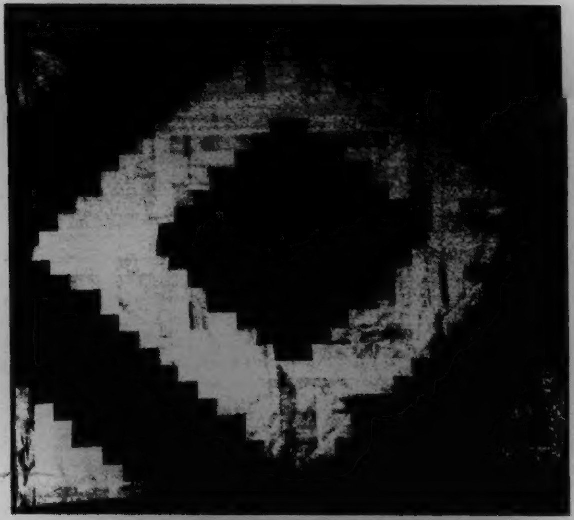


Figure 18. Earth and Sky - detail

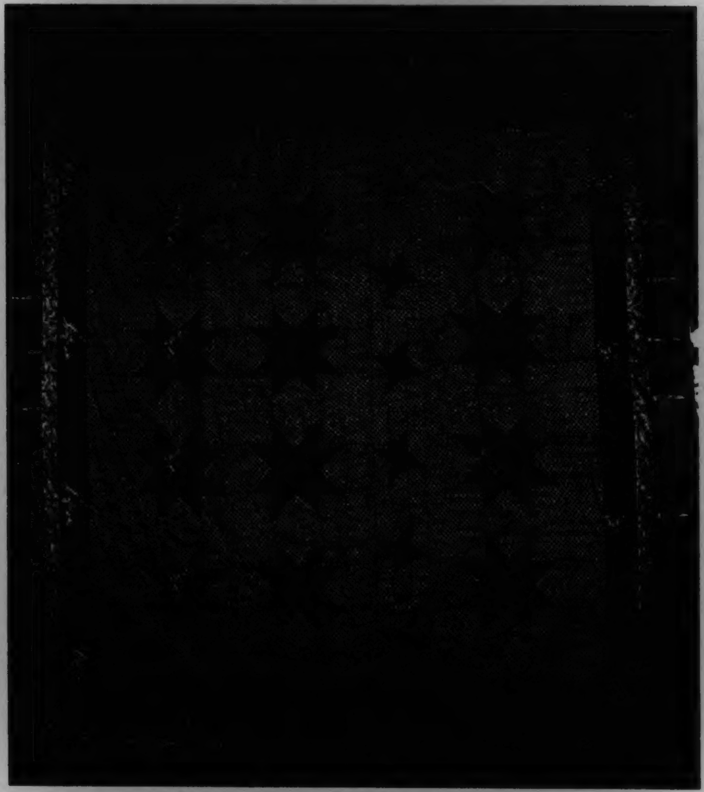


Figure 19. Reach for the Stars

Figure 20. Country Stars

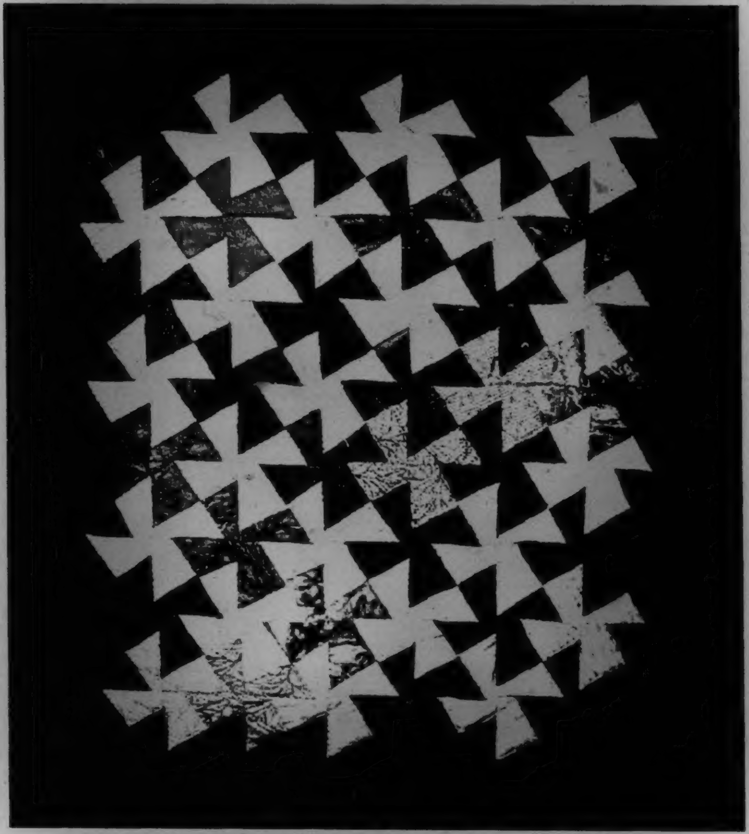


Figure 21. Pansies

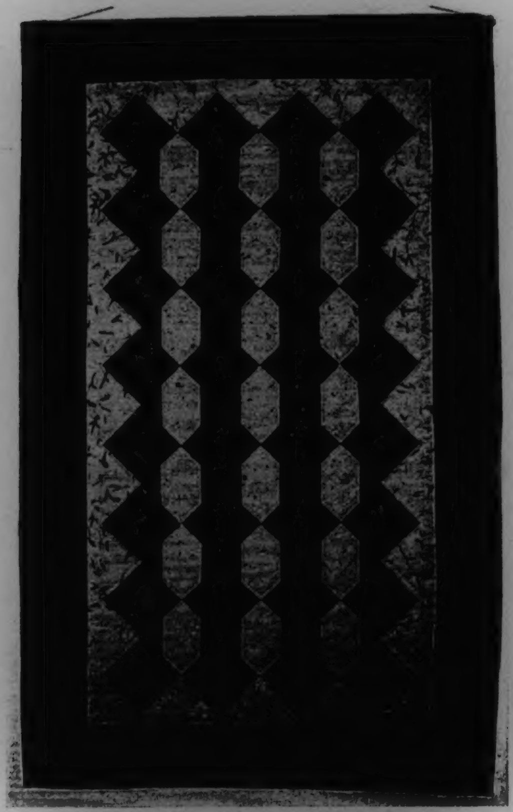


Figure 22. Waltz

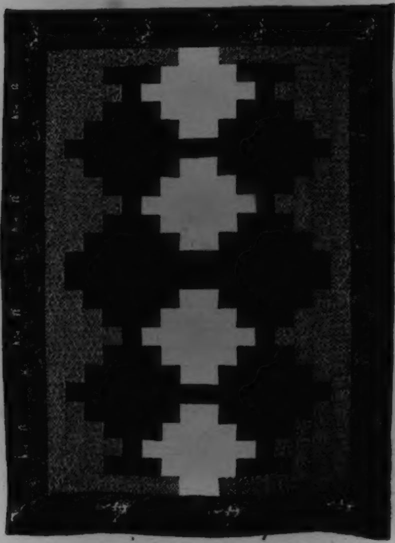
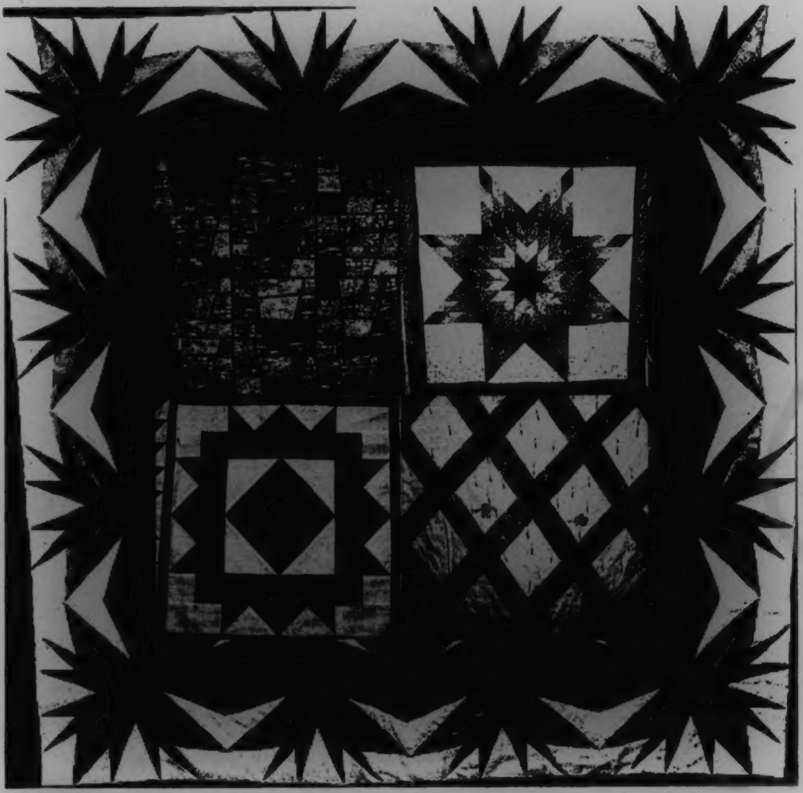


Figure 23. Building Blocks

Figure 24. **Ellen's Virtual Block**



"I never really felt that I'd found my niche until I started quilting."
Ellen

Ellen: "[My husband's] mom had started to make quilts for all of the grandchildren. And because [he] and his two younger brothers were married within five or six years of one another, there were kind of a raft of grandchildren. She had made a lot of quilts with wool inside of them."

Peggy: "Okay…That's the German way!"

Ellen: "Yeah well, that's their background."

Peggy: "Cause that's what I was used to – quilts with wool."

Ellen: "Actually, her sister-in-law had made quite a few of them. And just before we got married, she had started making like whole cloth type quilts. There were some that were pieced, but not very many. Mostly they were pieced from scraps and stuff.

Peggy: "From their clothing? Or whatever was around?"

Ellen: "Yeah, whatever was around. It wasn't that many years ago, but you know…They were always frugal and they had a place where they could get wool carded.

"…We have still one [wool quilt] at the cabin too, that we got for a gift from several of [my husband's] aunts. They were mostly tied and that's how [my mother-in-law] did all of her quilts at that point."

Peggy: "Did they have their own sheep? Or they got wool from somebody local?"

Ellen: "I think they got wool from the Hutterites."

Peggy: "Okay. That's where we get ours. I have a big bat of it ready to go."

Ellen: "I think they got it from the Hutterites, but Mom had a friend that carded it. So they had it carded and washed and everything.

"When [our first child] was born, she made him a whole cloth quilt with a flannel backing on it. And he carried it around for forever – maybe ten years."

Peggy: "So it was baby-size?"

Ellen: "Yeah…square. Maybe forty by forty [inches]. But the backing of it was changed probably five times because the flannel wore out.

"And then when [our next baby] was born, she made a Fortrel quilt."

Peggy: "Oh! You can pave roads with Fortrel."

Ellen: "I think that Fortrel is going to be one of those things that's left in the landfill sites. You know, a hundred years from now…a century from now!"

Peggy: "My grandma made some too!"

Ellen: "It was actually like a pinwheel design with pink and yellow and white and blue. And it's actually a very attractive quilt. But the backing of it has been remade several times too. And the thread wears out before the fortrel does, so we have to keep patching it and putting it together. But [my daughter's] going to be twenty-eight in August, so that's how old the quilt is.

"I think originally, it must have been sewn together somehow maybe by hand? Because the backings have been put on over top of one another several times, so I'm not sure actually how it was prepared."

Peggy: "So you have layers of backing? Did she machine sew or did she do most of her stuff by hand?"

Ellen: "No, the pieces were machine sewn. But I don't know how it was actually put together. And she made one for our [youngest child] too.

"When we moved here…our kids were sort of getting out of their baby quilts so my sister-in-law and I made a few whole cloth, tied together quilts. We had a quilt frame actually fashioned for us –our husband's built one (laughs) – that was several years ago too!"

Peggy: "So you made quilts for the kids beds when they got out of their cribs?"

Ellen: "Um hmm, more like fashion quilts to go with the things I did in their room, like if I couldn't find fabric to go with the wallpaper. And I was working in a paint and wallpaper store at the time, so I was doing all kinds of funky things with their bedrooms. I'd make quilts to go on their beds that would go with whatever I did in their room.

"And then I didn't have anything to do with [quilts] for a long, long time. [I started again] maybe about seven years ago, six years ago."

Peggy: "What got you back into it?"

Ellen: "Well, my sister-in-law…quilts. She actually does the books for Lori."

Peggy: "Oh!"

Ellen: "…She had been like me. We had been through every craft form imaginable. Well, we both still knit and I crocheted. She did some cross-stitch and I cross-stitched for a long time and I did a lot of needlework type stuff, but I never really felt that I'd found my *niche* until I started quilting. And she said the same thing too.

"…I thought well, I'm going to try this. And actually I was at our cabin at Hinton, and happened to be looking for fabric to make some curtains for in our bedroom. And wandered into a sewing store – the fabric store – in Hinton. [They] had done a sampler quilt the time before, and the sampler quilt was on the wall."

Peggy: "It wasn't the heirloom sewing; it was different blocks?"

Ellen: "It was a real true sampler, and I loved the colours that were in it. And I loved the way they were used. They were kind of purples and turquoises and greens. And not the type of thing that was real common ten years ago…it was really a *modern* version of colours that I *really* liked. And so that kind of grabbed me.

"And I'd seen one that Rita had done, and…I *liked* the technique but I didn't like the colours. And I thought, 'Gee, I could do that and do it better' you know, do something that *I* would like. (Laughs)" (I/1A/52-106)

Ellen: "I asked [the Hinton store] to send me their newsletter. So I went to their next [class]. In the interim, I'd gone to Lori's and taken their beginner quilt [course].

"It basically showed you how to do quarter inch seams, and how to…put blocks together, and then rows together and the binding. It was basically the whole ball of wax, but it wasn't very many hours and it was a small crib-sized quilt.

"I had probably just finished that quilt, and I went to the retreat [in Hinton] to do this quilt, the *Double Irish Chain*."(Figure 25)

Peggy: "That was the first one you did…Is *that* the first quilt you did?"

Ellen: "Yeah…yeah…."

Peggy: "I *love* that pattern."

Ellen: "I do too."

Peggy: "I could do several of those!"

Ellen: "When I took it up there, the girl that taught the course said, 'Your fabrics are the way that a double Irish chain was traditionally done'."

Peggy: "And how's that?"

Ellen: "With these types of colours. With a light colour in the background, a floral, and a darker tone', right? And she said that it's not something that [is currently done], mostly they're two colour quilts now. Mostly [they are] like a white background or whatever. A lot of them were very bright, like *very* bright." (I/1A/108-136)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Ellen: "[I] took paper-piecing courses for those big florals…they're really nice. By that Christmas [my classmate] had made five of them and gave them all away as Christmas gifts (laughs)."

"And you know, I found that really boring. I didn't even finish the one that I [started]. It's in a bag downstairs [because] I didn't like it. It's paper-piecing and I don't *like* paper-piecing.

"I didn't like the progression, you know? Like, you're working on little pieces that don't fit together for such a long time. You're working on this section over here….

"You take the large pattern, that's freezer paper right? And you cut it apart into all these little pieces. And you basically have five greens and five blues and five other colours or whatever, and then a background colour.

"You work on this little corner over here and then this one, and this one. Then maybe you get this little corner fit together. It's taken you six days. And you've got this little corner put together, you know?

"[It's] just too long to get to any feeling of satisfaction that you've finished something. When you're working on a traditional block, you get a *block*. And you've *got* something! (Laughs) You know like, 'I made this block'! And it doesn't *take* you six days!"

Peggy: "And it looks like something."

Ellen: "Yeah!"

Peggy: "So you can see that it's going to be part of a bigger picture."

Ellen: "Yeah, and you can see that right away."

Peggy: (joking) "Instant gratification is what you need."

Ellen: "No…I don't need instant gratification, but I do definitely need to see where it's going a lot faster that what paper piecing does for me.

"I have since taken a *mystery* paper piecing weekend at Hinton."

Peggy: "Voluntarily?"

Ellen: "Yes. I love the girl who's teaching it. She's become a real good friend of mine." (I/1A/151-189)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"I never said I don't consider [quilting] to be art. I don't consider a lot of the quilting process to be an emotional endeavor, which to me is the 'artsy-fartsy' part, 'Let's give *meaning* to this stitch'." (I/2A/189-195)

--^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"For me [the creative part is] the colours …I can change my mind five times over one quilt. Like, I can go out and get the fabric for my Mariner's Compass and then say 'No. That's not going to work'. Because I can visualize it, and I'm not going to like that. So, why bother going to all the work of putting it together *knowing* you're not going to like it? And then I'll go out and buy another set. …[Previously purchased fabric] goes into the stash, or…pieces of it will become something else." (I/1A/364-371) (Figure 26)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"My daughter wants a quilt to cuddle up on the chesterfield with. She lost the 'blankie' Grandma made for her to the dog! It's got polyfill, it went camping, on her honeymoon, everywhere with her. …It was one of the first things she moved to her new house (laughs).

"[I'd like to make her] something cozy. Flannelette on the back and serviceable." (I/2A/302-321)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"I planned to give [the *Nana's Garden* quilt] (Figure 27) to my Mom, but I'd better get a move on it…It's for her eightieth birthday this year…. It was going to be a Mother's day gift for her but I never got finished. It was going to be for so many gifts, but it never [got finished].

"…These colours make me think of [Mom]… Some of the fabrics are from dresses I made [my daughter] when she was a baby.

"I know what I basically want to do [to quilt] it, but won't do it until I can visualize it finished…I can think of several [possibilities]. The one I'm leaning to just to get it finished, is just to sew lines from corner to corner, but I don't want to do that." (I/2A/201-226)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Ellen: "There was one girl actually, who teaches at Quilters' Dream on the north side. And she's one of those people who sews faster than anyone. Her machine is always going full tilt! And she does the most beautiful work! The most fantastic work - different!

"And she uses the kind of fabric that I think that a lot of people who are quilters sort of stick their noses up [at]. 'Cause I find we become fabric snobs, you know? It's not bought at a quilt store so it's, you know….

"Like she does arched attic windows. She did one of those Australian quilt book, quilting things…heirloom quilting. There's lace on it [and] there's embroidery work from [the] machine.

"She works at a bank, and that was what they auctioned off for the United Way. I mean, that thing was probably worth about three or four thousand dollars. I don't know if they realized. I mean, it was beautiful. Just gorgeous!"

Peggy: "What colours did she use?"

Ellen: "It's all ecru and peach tones."

Peggy: "Oh my goodness! How did she feel giving that away?"

Ellen: "I don't know!"

Peggy: "I'd have a hard time parting with something like that."

Ellen: "She probably gets paid something…in order to raffle that…. I think more for material. I mean, the *hours* that went into that – just incredible!"

Peggy: "Well, I hope she signed it."

Ellen: (laughs) "Yeah! I don't know whether she would have or not."

(I/1A/240-269)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Sashing

Peggy: "You did the mystery paper-piecing class at Hinton, did you finish that?"

Ellen: "Yeah! I was challenged to have it finished by the following retreat."

Peggy: "Who challenged you?"

Ellen: "One of the girls that didn't take the course!" (Laughs)

Peggy: "From Hinton?"

Ellen: "Yes. I was bound and determined to have it finished, so I did!"

Peggy: "And it had to be finished, when?"

Ellen: "Six months after I started it."

Peggy: "…So the mystery paper piecing, was that more fun than doing the flower?"

Ellen: "No…it was worse. It was *horrible*! You didn't know where you were going at all…it's a lot of angular piecing. It's like doing a mariners compass or something like that, and there's a lot of star arms and stuff to it that are…fussy.

"There's five colours in the thing. I really like the colours, and I think that was part of the reason why I finished it. I liked the way they went together and I wanted to see what it would be like when it was finished.

"...I really had to work to finish it. I *really* did. Because it was really *not* something I was enjoying doing."

Peggy: "And when did you lose interest?"

Ellen: (laughing) "About three hours after I started!"

Peggy: "You still couldn't see what was happening?"

Ellen: "Well, you didn't know what was going to happen, period, because you didn't see the finished product until the very last day.

"[The instructor] thought it was going to be a lot faster for us to finish, and that we would have part of it finished when we left. That we just had borders and stuff to finish." (I/1A/204-240)

Ellen: "By [the end of the retreat] you kind of have an idea what might be happening. You've been sewing for...three hours on Friday night, you start at 9:00 on Saturday morning, or earlier if you can't sleep and lots of us do. It was beautiful weather up there that weekend, and I wasn't sewing that long. I went for a walk.

"...I came home and I thought, 'Well, I guess if I'm going to do this, I'm going to *do* this', and I did a little bit every time I went downstairs. I just kept at it.

"But what the biggest problem was, is that you did, it think it was twelve...squares that were the same. And then twelve other squares that were the same, which ended up being the other half of the squares...and then you worked on the middle section of this thing.... So basically, you were working on the border pieces...."

Peggy: "From the outside, in!"

Ellen: "Yeah!" (Moans)

Peggy: "So you get the tedious stuff done while you're still enthusiastic."

Ellen: "But it was just...it was *painful*! It really was. And...even after I had the [pattern] picture, and knew what I was going to get, I was *not* inspired to finish that thing!"

Peggy: "So what do you think of it now?"
Ellen: "Still, I like the colours."
Peggy: "Were the colours your choice?"
Ellen: "Yes. Oh yeah."
Peggy: "And the pattern? Was it worth it?"
Ellen: "Yeah. Well for me it was worth it to just *finish* it…."
(I/1A/275-305) (Figure 28)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Ellen is creative and has a good eye for colour. Quilting stimulates her imagination, and it seems that she can hardly keep up with her ideas. Ellen has many pieced tops that she claims are the "fun part" of quilting. They would make beautiful quilts, and she is sometimes teased about the fact that they are unfinished. Bee members have offered to help with the final work, but at the time of this study, Ellen had not taken them up on their offers. If finished, Ellen's quilts would be shown to others and held up to scrutiny and possible judgement. My sense is that this situation would make her uncomfortable.

Ellen has an extensive collection of quilting resources. Her stash, collected over many years, is a visual delight, and she has a considerable library of reference materials. Ellen is generous and is often consulted for information; social aspects of quilting are important to her. She refers often to her many friends and regularly attends retreats and events.

Ellen's sashing is the challenging paper-pieced mystery quilt she completed even though it became tedious. From her story, I sensed that she had to dig deeply to muster the stamina to finish this quilt and she is proud of the accomplishment. Ellen moved beyond the technical aspects to finish this aesthetically pleasing quilt. Through the process Ellen learned to trust her instincts, which built self-awareness and confidence.

Figures 29 to 31 are examples of her other quilts. Figure 27 is part of Ellen's virtual block because of its meaning, but also because it is one of the unfinished pieces. On hindsight, more photos of the quilt tops could have been included because they are important to Ellen's persona, but this point was not recognized until the end of the research.

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

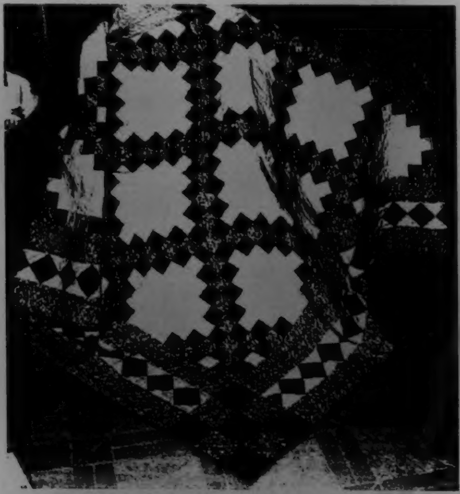


Figure 25. Double Irish Chain

Figure 26. Magic Tiles

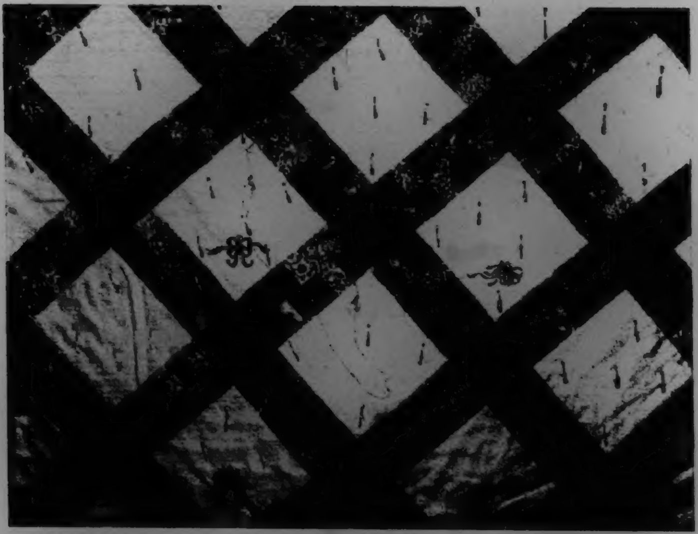


Figure 27. Nana's Garden

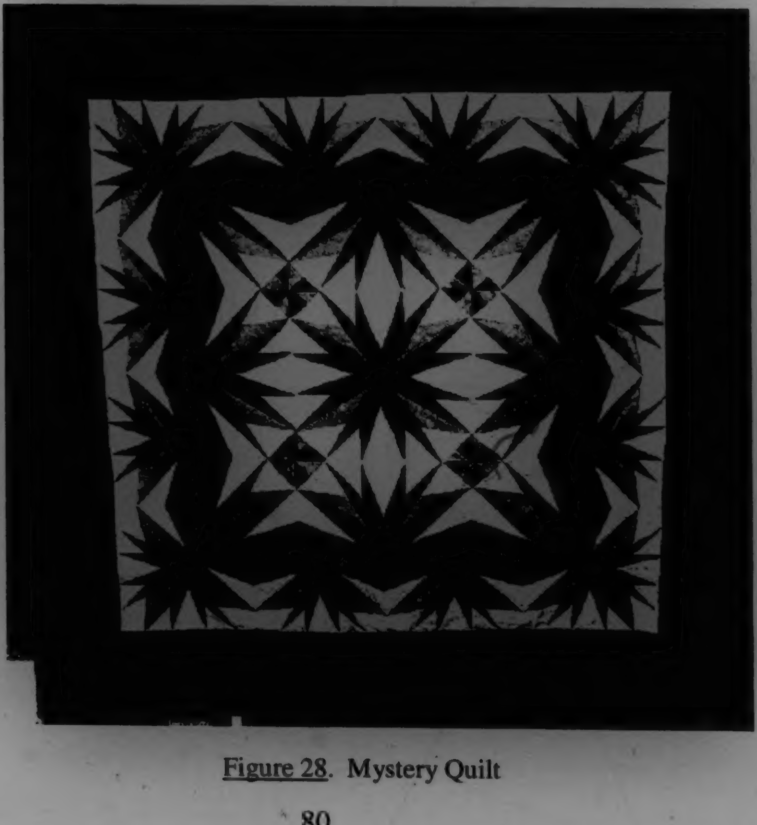


Figure 28. Mystery Quilt

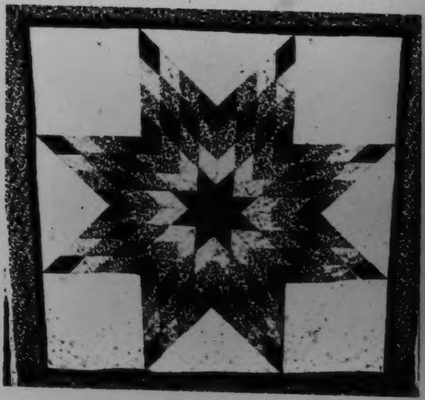


Figure 29. Lonestar 1

Figure 30. Tessellations

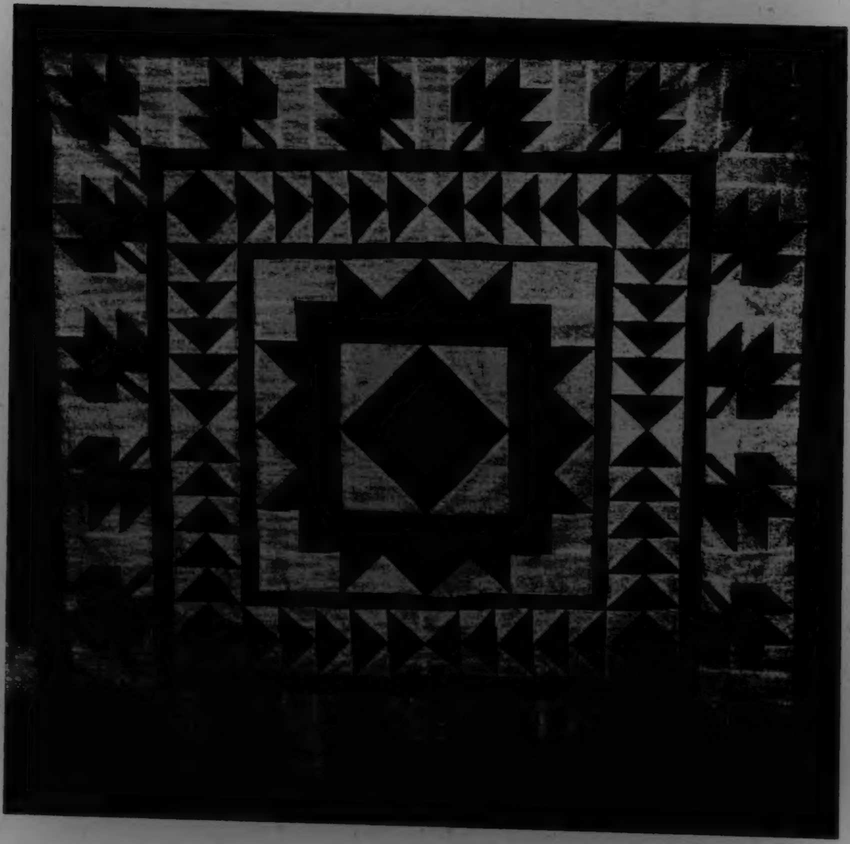
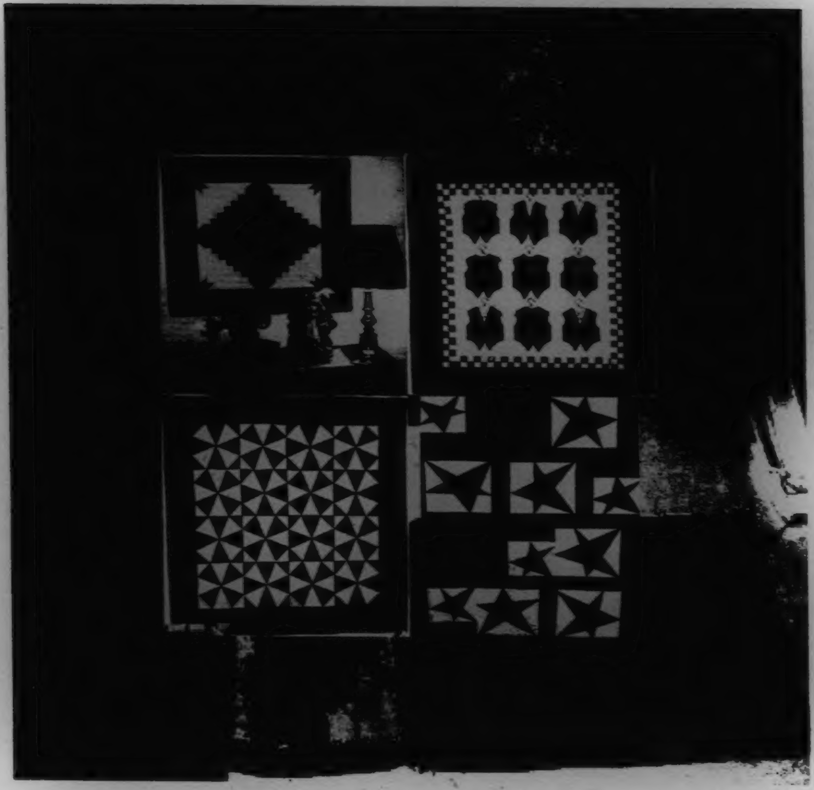


Figure 31. Round Robin Sampler

Figure 32. **Faye's Virtual Block**



"[Quilting]...brings people together."
Faye

Faye: "I don't know [what got me started]. It was just something I was supposed to do, you know? I *loved* it. Once I got started, my stash started growing (laughs)."

Peggy: "Sounds like you like being able to collect the fabrics."

Faye: "Oh yeah! …At first I was working too, so I didn't have a lot of time to quilt and even less time to meet other quilters. So I sort of did it on my own. I didn't have a lot of time for classes and stuff like that, either. But I've always taken a course every spring and fall. [Quilting] was just one I stuck to for a while.

"It's funny because it's only been the last few years since we really started that group, that I've started quilting with other people. Up until that point, it was more just on my own. It was just my little corner; this is what I enjoy doing and everything else can be blocked out. Just go in [the sewing room] and sew. It was just something relaxing." (I/1A/45-62) (Figure 33)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Peggy: "When did you start quilting? Was there one person or one event – anything - that started you?"

Faye: "I walked into Lori's Fabric Cottage. I don't think I even knew there was such a thing really before."

Peggy: "As quilting?"

Faye: "Well yeah…I just went in there because it was a fabric store. I used to sew."

Peggy: "You were sewing garments?"

Faye: "Yeah, and when I got in there I thought, 'Hmmm, that's rather nice fabric', and started that way."

Peggy: "So which Lori's? The original one on Ash Street?"

Faye: "Yeah."

Peggy: "Well, she had dress fabric then too."

Faye: "She did, but not many. When I went in most of them were just clearing out so she must have been at the end of that." (I/1A/04-12) (Figure 34)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Faye: "There was nobody in my family who [quilted]. No grandmother…I just started out fresh somewhere around '92 or '93."

"…I had a comforter that I thought, 'Oh I'll make a new top for it' 'cause it was all wrecked. So I did, and it's totally gross, but it's also the one we always use.

"…But it's also the most comfortable one too. I don't worry about it, 'cause it's ugly and it's not sewn well, and so it can be dragged around.

"But I don't know what made me start. I've always liked fabric." (I/1A/19-35) (Figure 35)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Peggy: "That whole idea of competition. I have trouble with that too. Because they're looking at…I mean, literally [judges] are out there with little rulers and measuring your seams."

Faye: "And that's not why I do it, you know? I mean, there're enough stressful things in life…. If people look at mine they're going to find lots of little errors. And I'm not going to un-pick all the time. There are times that you do, but it's *quilting*! It's just supposed to be relaxing and enjoyable. I think it started to get – well, maybe it's just my head that's started to get – a little crazy for a while there. I went to the Seattle quilt show a couple years ago."

Peggy: (laughs) "Why are you shaking your head?"

Faye: "Well I mean, the things that won there! To me they're not [quilts]. I mean they're made with fabric; they're pictures made with fabric, you know? They were absolutely *beautiful* things in there. But I have no hope of *ever* making anything like that, nor do I desire to.

"…[Some of] it was such abstract stuff that, I'm sorry, but I just can't weave all that into a few strips of fabric. That's just not what I'm thinking about here. To me, I had to pull myself away from all that. Just say, 'No' - get back to the enjoyment…of putting two straight lines together." (I/1A/157-176)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"I've done a few quilts for people…like I did one for a girlfriend that died last November. I made it for her probably about a year ago before that, …when you're making it you're thinking about that person – she lived in Kamloops – and I guess those are probably my *favorite* ones to do because you're thinking of somebody as you're doing it. And the whole time, you know, I was just remembering time when we did things together and stuff, and then she died…. The daughter therefore, has got the quilt and she loves it too. …It was really appreciated.

"And then I made one for a friend of ours her daughter got shot by her husband and left three little kids behind." (I/1A/73-85) (Figure 36)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Peggy: "What kinds of patterns or themes did you choose for your friend's [quilt]?"

Faye: "Scrappy quilts. I like scrappy [and] I like traditional – I don't call myself an artist. I know a lot of quilters tend to do that. I don't think I'm an artist at all. I just like the fabrics; I like how they go together and it's just something about them. Whether I use a pattern or think it up myself or whatever.

"…It's not the art part that I enjoy doing. There's something about when those seams match, you know? It's very fundamental! It doesn't take much to thrill me (we laugh)."

Peggy: "When your points come out?"

Faye: "Yeah!"

Peggy: "Yeah! That's exciting! When the corners match? The techniques, right? You must like the colours and stuff like that too, no?"

Faye: "The colours! The colours I love. What I don't understand is people that quilt and say, 'I can't pick out the colours. Like, 'I need help picking out…'. No! That's the best part of it, is going and picking out fabrics and stuff. So, I don't understand those kind of people.

"…I know Gail does a lot of themes and stuff like *art*; hers is more…art work. And I'm more traditional."

Peggy: "I like traditional though…I guess I'm not a real experienced quilter so I sort of like to stick with the tried and true."

Faye: "Although there's a lot of quilters out there that I think skip over the traditional and go right to the arts. Like to me, those are the artist kind of people 'cause they're using fabric as their medium. …I don't think that's what I'm doing at all. I like making them just because they're homey and the colours and the patterns on them and stuff. All of these people that can just skip right over the traditional – they don't do any of that.

"…I'm not putting down the way I like quilting, that's just how I like to think of it. I don't want to make a nine-patch quilt and feel totally stupid because that's all it is: a nine-patch quilt. If the fabrics are nice and it's for somebody to put on their kids' bed…for whatever reason, that's why I want to do it." (I/1A/99-134) (Figure 37)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Sashing

Faye: "For a while there I think I was feeling like, 'Boy, you're certainly dumb 'cause you're not getting in and growing with it, and doing all these wonderful, fancy things that a lot of people in the Edmonton Guild are…they're *artists*. …I've come around now to realize that's not what I ever want to do. Like right now…that's just not down the road for me."

Peggy: "There's something for everybody."

Faye: "Yeah. There is an awful lot. And I think you just have to find out what it is. For a while I was feeling pushed into, 'Okay, you've been quilting for this long, now get up to the next phase', which is more the artsy, creative kind of thing. Who says it has to go up to that next stop?

"For a while I wasn't very happy with…not with quilting, with the way I *felt* about quilting. One day I just thought, 'No, this isn't right. This is me. This is what *I* enjoy doing and this is *why* I enjoy doing it. If I do five hundred more quilts and they're *all* traditional patterns, I don't care. I like doing them. They make me happy to do them. It seems to make the people you give them to happy. I've never wanted to go into any competitions or anything like that. To me that is a *different* step, that's not the *next* step.

"…You hear [some quilters] saying, 'I started it this way, but then it didn't [work]…so we just put this on….' Okay, you know, but to me that's art. That is something different.

"…I really do think that people need to realize that for so long that that [art] was the next step. And now I realize that it's not the next step – it's another step." (I/1A/128-200) (Figure 38)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Faye discovered her own strengths through quilting. For a long time, she thought she had to move beyond traditional quilting and do more "artistic" work. Faye understands the value of quilts as a means of establishing and maintaining relationships. Her quilts reinforce many important relationships. Simple quilts do not take much time, and are still important to family and friends. As the group's fastest sewer, Faye will finish a project quickly, perhaps give it away, then move on to the next task.

Quilting helped Faye recognize her potential and gave her opportunities to contribute by organizing the people aspect of patchwork. She established the new guild in the community and is the driving force behind the organization. Limiting her repetoire to traditional designs and simple quilting projects allows Faye time to quilt and do administrative tasks. Examples of her projects include Figure 39 to Figure 43.

Faye occasionally embellishes manufactured items with quilting. Her sashing is a purchased sweatshirt that she appliqued with leaves, an example of how the concept of quilting can be stretched. Faye uses this technique more than the other bee member's do, which helps explain how she makes time for other activities.

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Figure 33. Sewing Room

Figure 34. Leaves Appliquéd on Sweatshirt

Figure 35. Family Room Quilt

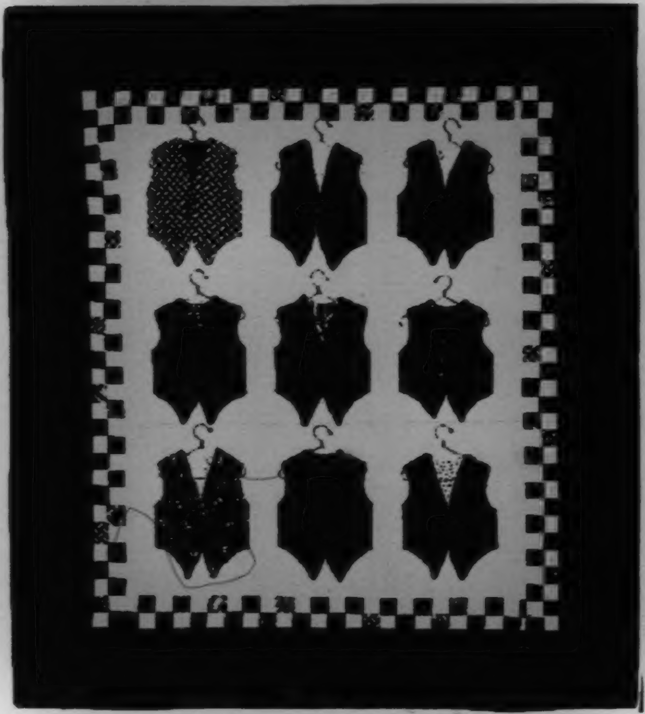


Figure 36. Empty Vests

Figure 37. Sunflower

Figure 38. Leaf Applique

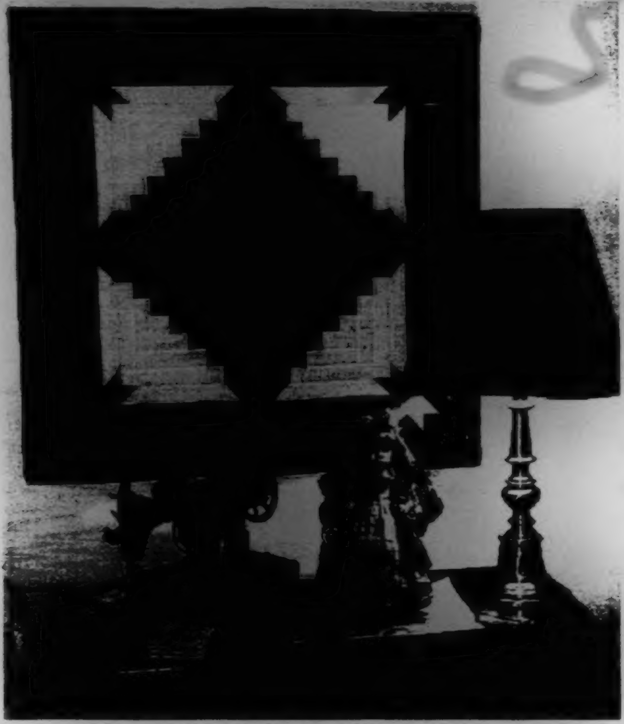


Figure 39. Traditional Display

Figure 40. Table Runner

Figure 41. Sampler

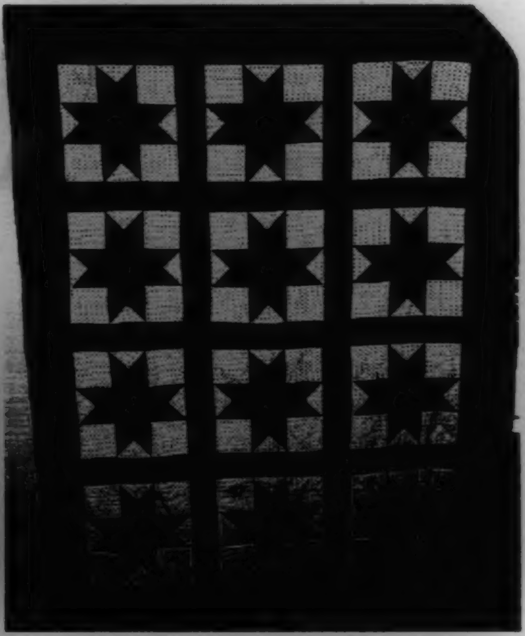


Figure 42. Ohio Stars

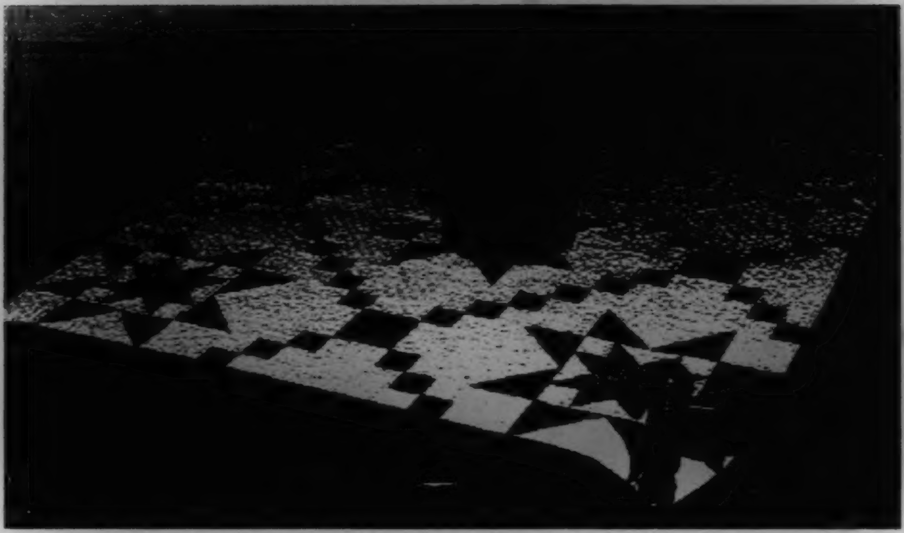
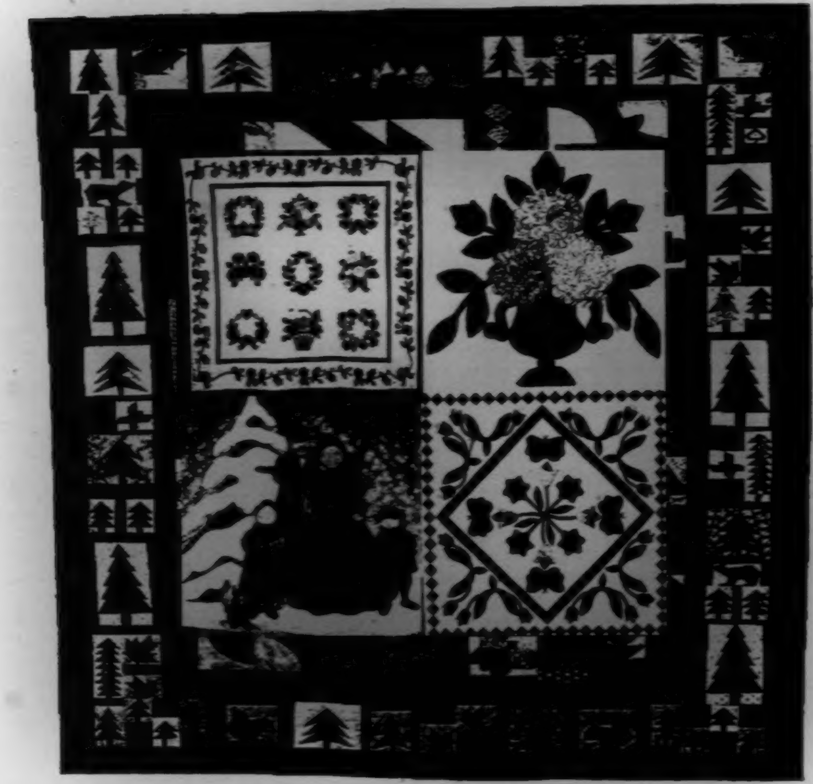


Figure 43. Table Topper

Figure 44. **Gail's Virtual Block**



"It's a good idea to take pictures of your quilts because it's nice to refer back…to see the growth…and what you're capable of doing."
Gail

"My mom quilted in a church group doing charity work. I don't remember her quilting, but I do remember her sewing.

"My mother-in-law – we didn't get along too well, my mother-in-law and I – and when we first went out there I was looking for stuff that we could, *I* could, draw her out on, so that we could get along, and she did lots of the quilts.

"They lived on a farm and they had a number of quilts on the beds; you used your left over scraps from sewing. She once gave me some stars that she had pieced and hadn't put on to anything. They were just put together, and they needed to be appliqued on to something. She gave them to me, so I felt I had to do something with them.

"So I took these home and I appliqued them onto some muslin squares. I had *no* idea what I was doing. Then I phoned my mom and I said, 'Okay, now what do I do?' and she said, 'Well, you add some borders, some strips - now I know is sashing - between them'. So I did that next, and she said, 'Well we used to use old blankets. Dad had an old…navy blanket', my dad was in the navy, 'so we'll put the navy blanket in the middle and sew it together'.

"…I still have that quilt. I've replaced the stars, 'cause that was my oldest son's quilt on his bed, and of course little boys pick off things, and [since] it's buttonhole appliqued on. …I did it by hand - I didn't know you could use machines." (I/1A/01-21) (Figure 45)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"The first quilt was important 'cause it's got my dad's navy blanket in. This other quilt's important 'cause…I don't have *a* quilt, I have *lots* of quilts that are important for various reasons." (I/1A/46-48)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"When I was expecting [my second child] I made another quilt. …He's coming up twenty-one [years old]. So I made a baby quilt for him and again, my mother in law gave me some…patterns for blocks. They were out of…1940's newspapers. You transferred them onto muslin and then embroidered them. …You traced over top. You laid your muslin over top and traced around the design and them embroidered them. …It was called a nursery rhyme quilt and the one in the paper probably had sixty blocks in it. I chose nine and made it into just a crib-sized quilt.

"…When you ask about signature or important quilts, [I am reminded that] my mother saw me embroidering them. And my mom liked to do handwork, so I traced a couple of the blocks for her and she did a set of squares. …Last year, when I found out that my son and his wife were expecting, I made those blocks. Because they were given – both the grandmothers have passed away – the pattern came from one grandmother and the blocks were made by another grandmother, and *I* made them into a quilt. So, all great-grandmothers and grandmother are represented in the quilt. …The original quilt I have. A second quilt that my mom did belongs to my middle son and [his wife] (I/1A/21-44). (Figure 46)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"The middle child…has asked for quilts. That's why he probably has more of my quilts than the other two. …The youngest one just moved out and he doesn't have room for anything.

"…Each of my two grandchildren have one of my quilts. But they haven't wanted one until lately. They've started to say they would like me to make one for them. It would be a wall-hanging as opposed to a quilt, because the younger people like the duvets. They're going to the Maritimes this summer and I said, 'You pick out something out there and bring it back' so I have an idea of what they want. (I/1A/283- 298)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"My [middle son] wanted one for a railing on a balcony. …I made one that was very male oriented. …[He hangs it] quilt side to the living room, so that when you're sitting in the living room, you look up and you see it." (I/1A/322-338)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"According to my husband, [I sew in] every room in the house! I have a room upstairs…and the room downstairs is the one with the fabric and my big machine." (I/1A/250-256)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"My husband likes to go to fabric stores. He's worse than me. There was a time we were on Vancouver Island, a couple years ago, and we went into a fabric store. The problem is he's always saying, 'Look at this, look at this', so you can't *really* look at what you want to look at, because he's always showing you what he [likes].

"He walked in and he went over and he picked up this bolt of fabric – and it was gorgeous – and he said, 'This is really nice. You should get some of this'. And the owner came over and said, 'Oh, you have extremely good taste. That's $40.00 a metre' (laughs). That's the one that he put the bolt down and left the store. …He liked the colours.

"…He doesn't mind buying fabric. He likes helping choose and I often will ask him his opinion on stuff. …We don't always agree, but he has a good sense. For example, the angel, when I was going to put gold rays of sun coming down…I didn't think I should. I thought it would be over-doing it. …Without telling him what I think, he said, 'No that's fine the way it is. Don't do any more'. So yeah, I use him a lot for bouncing things off of." (I/1A/259-279)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"In 1982…I took a quilting course with a girlfriend. …We cut templates out of cereal boxes, and we cut [with] scissors and oh, it was a joyful experience. I enjoyed it though. …I made a couple of quilts using those [old] methods. It was a sampler quilt…by machine…different pieced blocks.

"Each week you would get a block, cut it out on the templates and go home…she'd give you instructions…you'd go home and make it, bring it back and then you'd learn another one. She taught you all the names of the different blocks…using very traditional [designs like] Grandmother's flower garden, all different methods.

"…That [quilt] unfortunately got worn out. That's the only one that I know of that I don't have." (I/1A/50-59)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"About '95 I took a quilting class at Lori's and since then I've been quilting seriously. Before that, you were involved with kids; you just didn't have the time or the money.

"It was a sampler quilt because I don't like making the same block twenty times. Now I've developed the applique because I can get more detail in the applique than I can with a pieced block. …I like detail. …My Baltimore album [quilt] would be the most detailed." (I/1A/69-79) (Figure 47)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"I like to try different techniques. The Baltimore Album was a challenge to work with because of the flowers [and] the dimension. My first quilts were the pieced blocks and the samplers… doing Seminole on one and doing Celtic on another, so that you have [tried] different methods." (I/1A/82-91) (Figure 48)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"Most of mine have some applique somewhere on it, whether it's [done by] hand or machine (Figure 49). …I do like paper piecing because again, it's not the same thing over and over. …Chances are, the *Storm at Sea*, I *will* paper piece, so I know that I have accurate blocks." (I/1A/237-247)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"I've got four on the go. …The angel [wall hanging]. One of my daughter's in- law won a block, so she asked me to make it for her.

"Then I have one called *Christmas Carolers* (Figure 50). …That one will go to the son who's a teacher and he takes his rugby team to England every second year. So they have to fundraise. I just realized they have a silent auction, and he's never asked for anything, so I thought 'Well, this is silly, I could send something'.

"He said that would be nice, because the thing that had raised the most money at their last silent auction, was a quilted item. I said fine…I've got 'till November.

"…I have another one festering, that's been around for a while. I want to do a *Storm at Sea* quilt. Now I'll be going back to doing the same block forty times. But, I want to intersperse it. I've made the center block with whales. [I'll] put the whale in the center and the *Storm at Sea* around it.

"…I've always liked that [*Storm at Sea*] block, and I happen to like the dimension. It has movement and it's one of those [quilts] that if you choose your colours right, you can see circles of flow of the waves…. Some people don't like them at all, because you feel motion when you look at them." (I/1A/155-203)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"Lately I have started taking pictures [of my quilts]. It's one of those things that you start to learn. It's a good idea to take pictures. A lot of [quilts] you give away, so it's nice to refer back…they're some of the work you have done.

"And to see the growth. You can really see growth if you've got some from way back. The techniques, the ability, the trends and what you're capable of doing.

"…In some ways [photographing your quilts] is *just* as important [as photographing your children] if not *more* important. There's a lot that goes into your quilts! A lot goes into your kids, but the quilts don't change. Kids keep changing and quilts are a static thing [but] they all have their own character." (I/1A/338-359)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"Consistency is the refuge of the unimaginative."
"If it's stitched with your hands it's stitched with your heart."
(Quotes Gail kept in her purse.)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Sashing

"If there was any one quilt that probably was the most… *freeing* for me, would be again a class at Lori's by a lady named Denise McKenna. She taught a class called *Taking Chances*. Instead of taking a pattern and following it…you made birds, you made trees, and then you put them up on a design wall and arranged them to suit yourself and filled in the spaces. (Figure 51)

"She taught us that… not 'she taught us'… she *showed* you how to work the concept that you don't need to follow a pattern. You can be free to create your own. Whereas before, I thought we had to follow one. My thought was you found a pattern, you follow step one, two, three, and you end up with a project. She gave me the freedom *not* to do that – to do what I want.

"I took [the course] because I liked the colours, and because of what I learned in it, I went a long way with [the technique]. That would probably be the turning point as far as doing traditional 'follow the pattern' traditional blocks…where you do the same block again and again. She showed me you don't have to do that, and I haven't done that again."

Peggy: "You haven't looked back."

Gail: "No. No! I just finished that big heart quilt, that is the same block again and again, and that reminded me yes, I *really* don't like doing these." (I/1A/90-105)

"[The *Taking Chances* quilt] was a sampler of sorts, but not done in a traditional sampler method. Say there were twelve [blocks with] birds and you lined them up in an eye-pleasing manner. Now you have all these blank spaces to fill in, and you have to come up with ideas as to how to fill it in. [The instructor] had suggestions, but each person is individual and what *you* like might not be what *they* like. So you fill it in your own way. '

"…You just start, you have to *start* and you do a lot of taking it apart. You haven't sewn them; you're placing it there and walking away and coming back the next day. In the end, 'Yup, that works for me'. It makes you feel right and then you start sewing it together.

"That was a very interesting experience. It really released me and gave me the freedom to say, 'I don't have to follow the pattern. I can do what I want'. And it will work. …It gave me the *confidence* to know that it would work." (I/1A/124-137)

"They were there: the staff of the store and Denise and Lori. Who ever you wanted would help you with colour choices. But everybody would choose what pleased them. I liked hers, so I had chosen those colours because that's what I was drawn to in the first place – the colour of the quilt. …She was a very good instructor for me." (I/1A/138-144)

"That was a very interesting class and most people didn't complete the quilt. She taught it three or four times because there was such an interest in it. It was such a striking quilt. They've had a few reunions and I still have people phoning [to] say, 'Oh you've finished yours. Can you come help me because I still haven't got mine put together'. And none of them have ever done it yet.

"…It takes a lot of *thought*. It was one of those quilts that you put on a design wall and you arrange [the blocks] and you walk away, and you come back the next day. It took a lot of time. It took a lot of stress - or not *stress* - it took so much thought [because] it wasn't just 'follow the pattern'. It was a very creative way of doing it, which takes time and everybody's an individual." (I/1A/105-120)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Gail is the only bee member who displays a small quilt on her front door so it can be seen from the street. The patchwork, which is changed regularly, prepares visitors for what is inside. Gail's quilts are found throughout her home, tastefully hung on walls and draped over furniture.

One soon notices the fine detail that is Gail's aesthetic signature. By mastering both applique and the "taking chances" technique, she is able to express her own creativity with fabric. Her quilts reflect stamina, patience and precision.

The more current and refined quilts are upstairs in the public areas such as the living room and dining room. The bedrooms and basement display a variety of patchwork pieces that provide a sense of Gail's growth through quilting. (Figure 51 to Figure 55) Gail has two sewing rooms. The one downstairs contains the sewing equipment, fabric stash and design wall, and the room upstairs is generally used for hand sewing because there is better light.

Quilts establish boundaries and symbolize territory. Gail's quilts and associated allotment of workspace, seems to be the most prominent feature in the house, but many designs reflect nature and wildlife, which her husband prefers. Gail's quilts define the space she shares with her spouse, and asserts who she is as an individual.

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

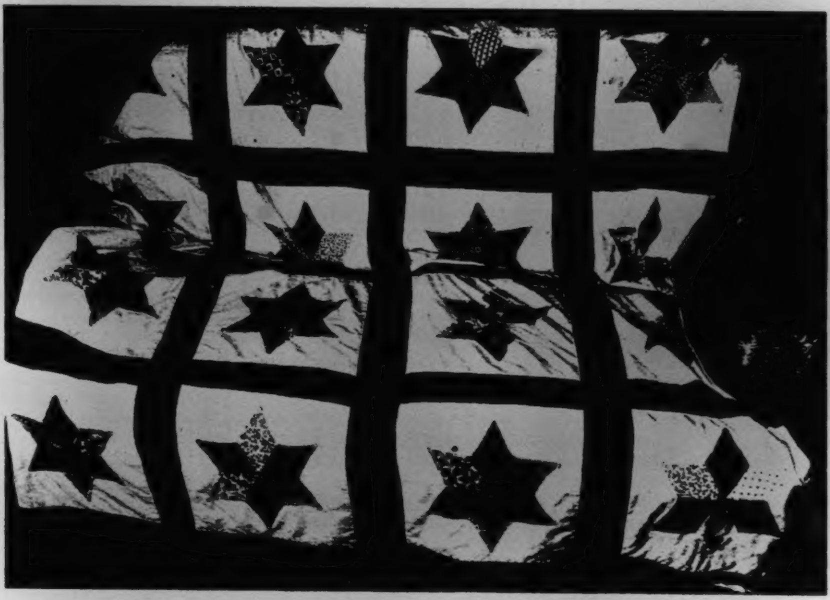


Figure 45. First Stars

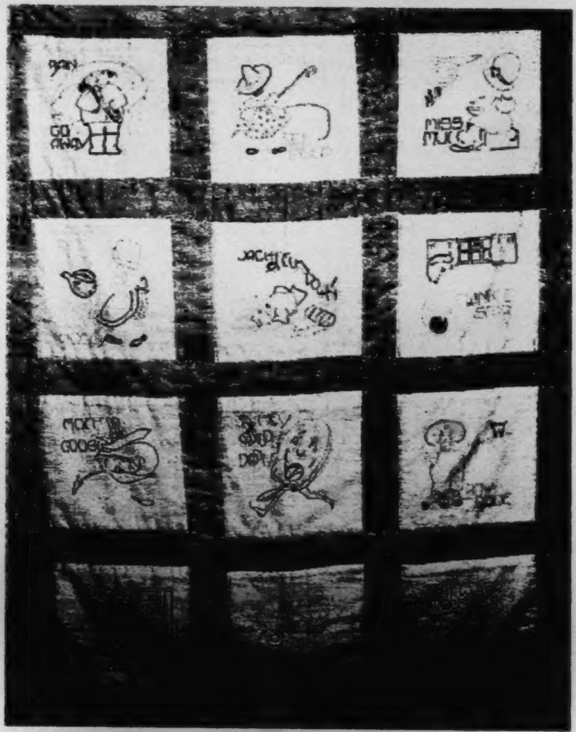


Figure 46. Nursery Rhymes

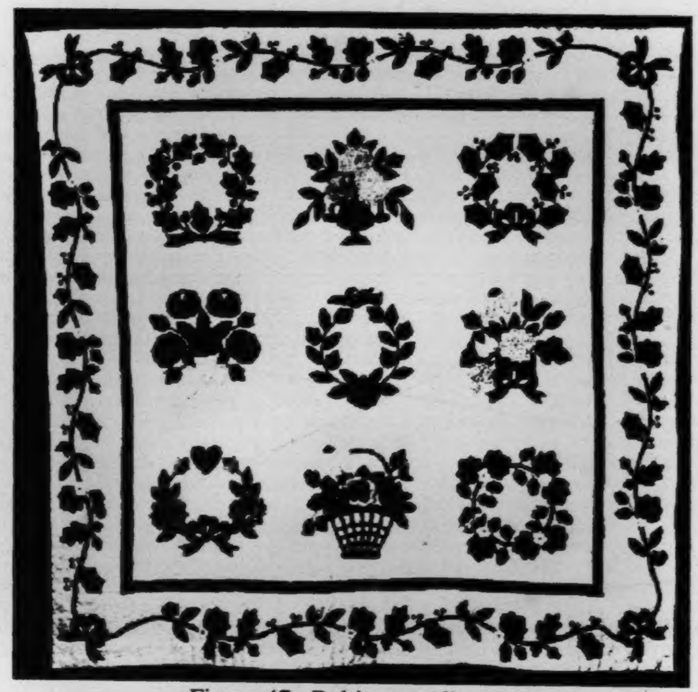


Figure 47. Baltimore Album

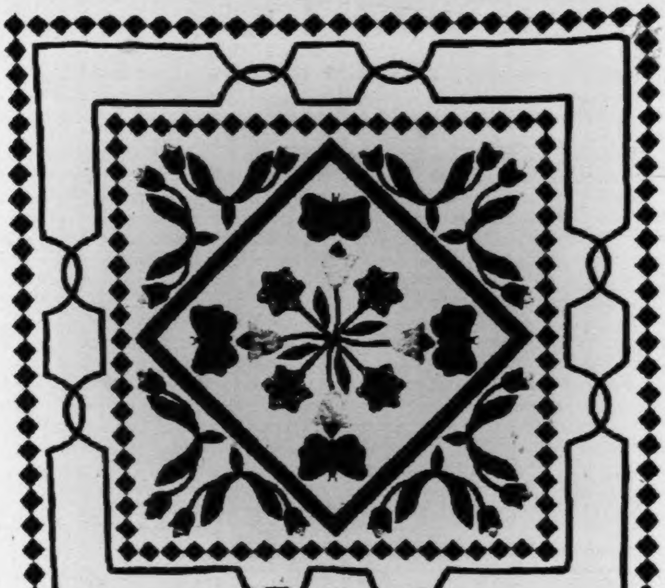


Figure 48. Elva's Garden

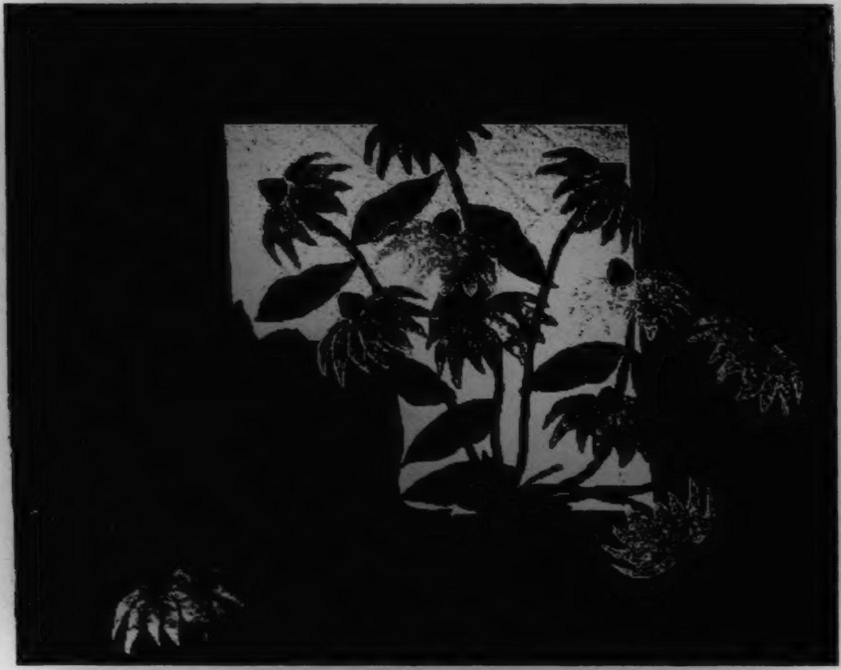


Figure 49. Fall Colours

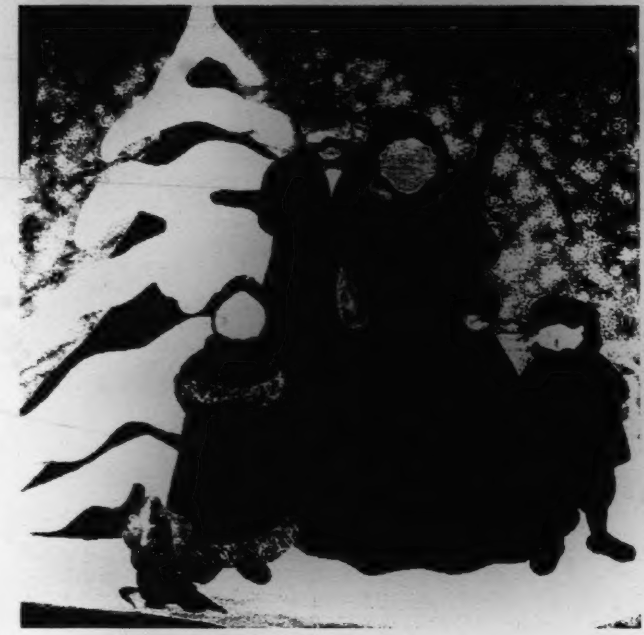


Figure 50. Christmas Carolers

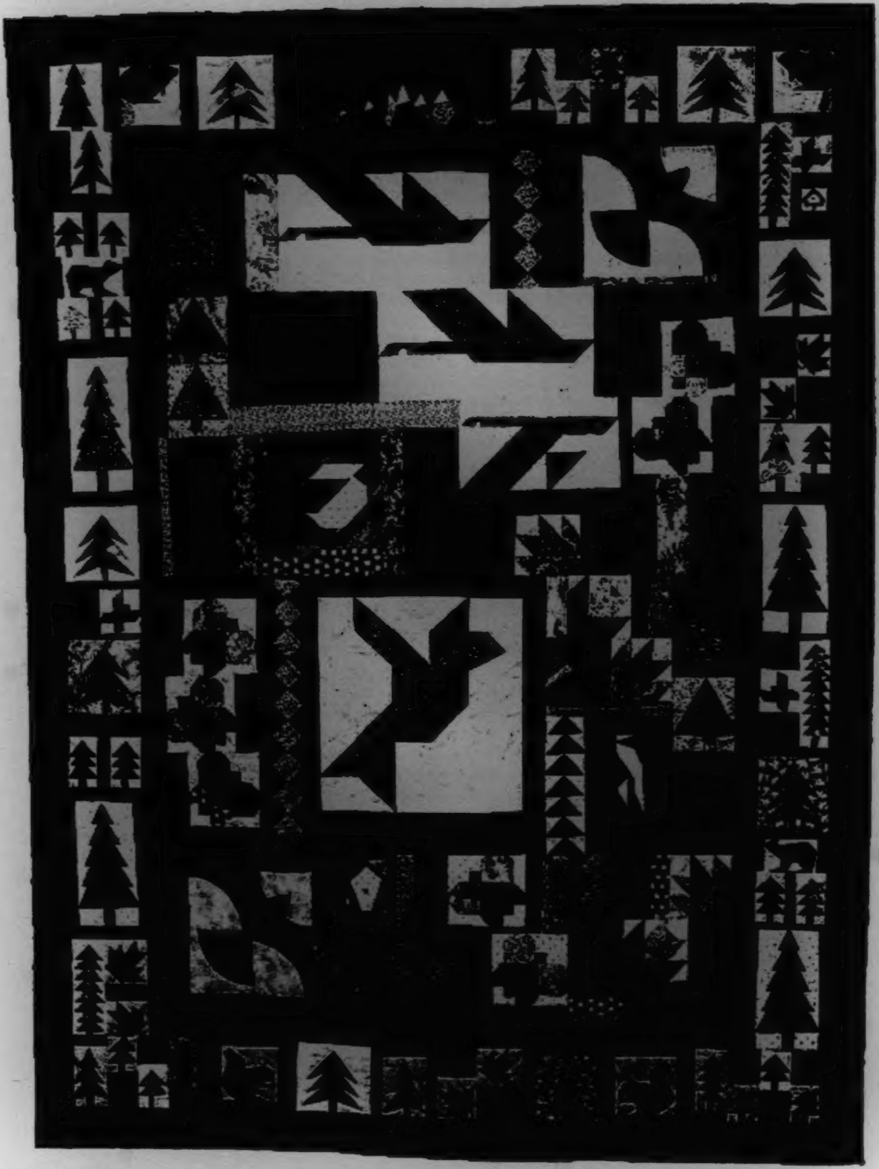


Figure 51. Taking Chances

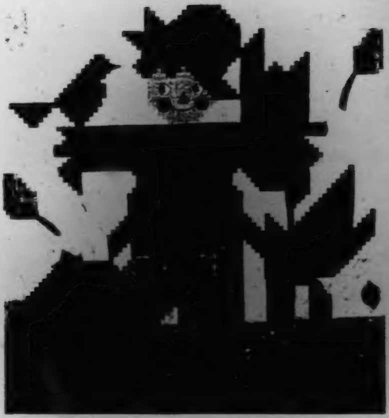


Figure 52. Autumn Splendor

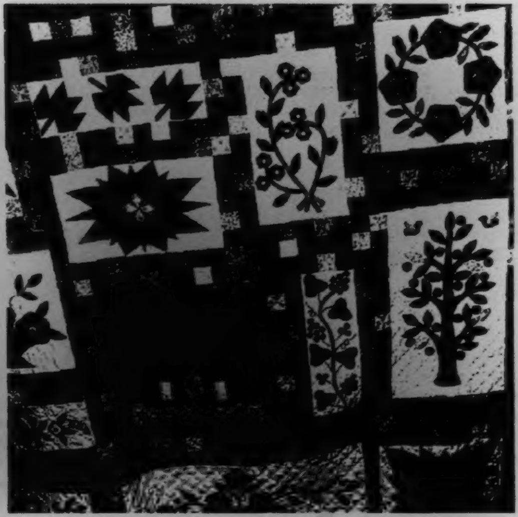


Figure 53. Grandmothers' Album

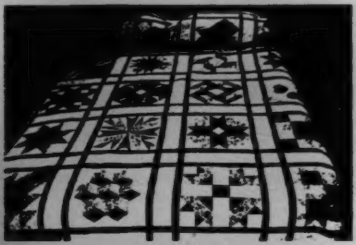


Figure 54. Sampler

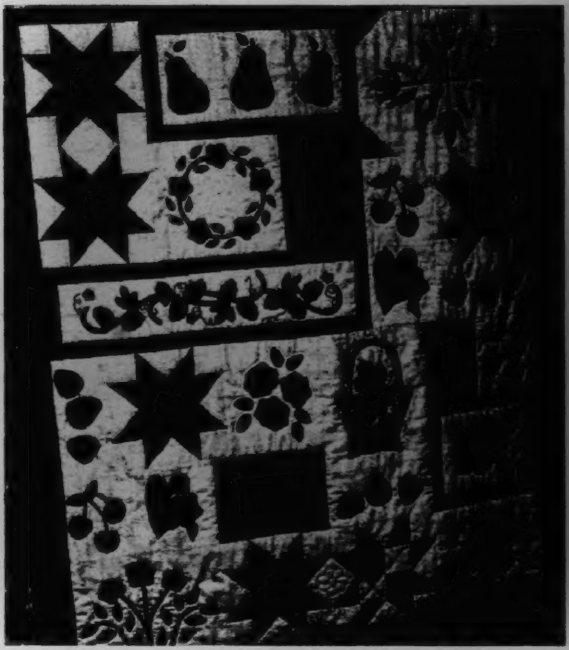
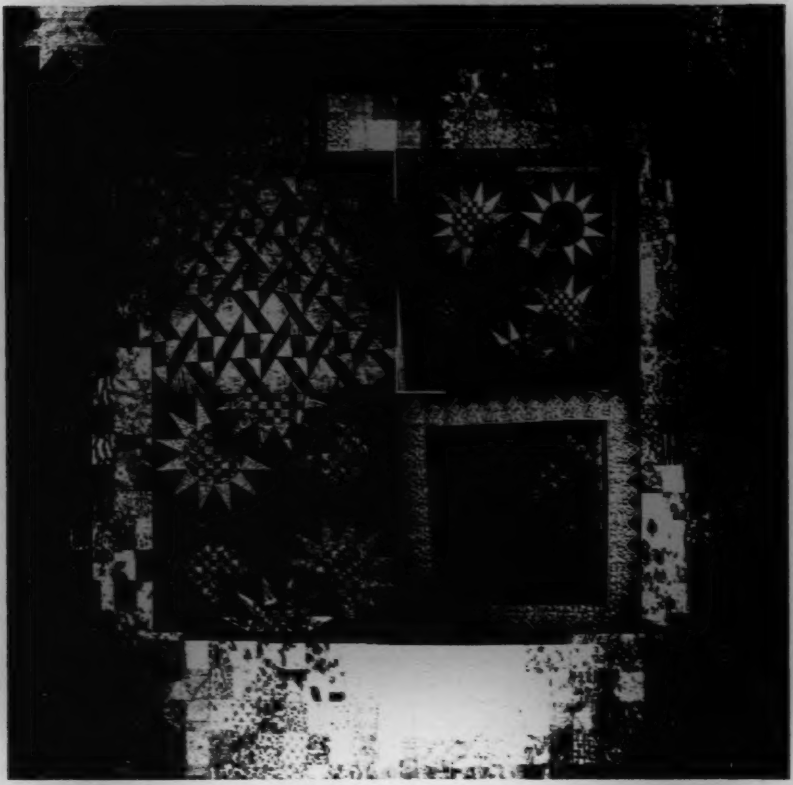


Figure 55. Wildberry Vines

Figure 56. Rail Fence

Figure 57. **Sharon H's Virtual Block**



"My quilt is like life…as we struggle with its challenges, to our surprise out of the rubble will arise a thing of beauty."

Sharon H.

"Years back, I was at my Grandfather's who had re-married when I was about six. My Grandmother had died when I was about a month old.

"So, the lace [on this quilt] has been around a long time. It was in the cupboard along with some other lacey pieces of tatting. (Showing me examples.) This is a dickey and it probably belonged to my great-grandmother…and some doilies…along with this piece of lace.

"It should have been about thirty-six inches square, but she worked on it while she had cancer, and I guess as she got sicker, her tension got more and more out of kilter. So what you had was thirty-six, thirty-six and then it went to about thirty-eight on one [side] and about thirty-seven [on the fourth side]. So you had something that was very un-square when you got to the one corner. …Two of them were fine, and then the next one was pretty good, but the last one corner was way out.

"So I'm sure over the years, anyone my Grandfather might have offered it to would have said, 'Well, this is wonderful Gordon, *but*…what are we going to do with it'? (Laughs)

"[The lace] looks white on [the quilt], but it didn't matter what I put it on – against a white background it became yellow. If you put it with the older, creamy linens – it looked beige. It never looked white. I did wash it. It's the old ivory, ecru type colour but its aged over the years and has yellowed. At this point you're certainly not going to put it into a bleach solution to whiten it.

"I'd dig it out every so often and think, 'What am I going to do with it?' and then one day I thought well, maybe I could put it on a quilt, but I didn't make an effort…maybe someday.

"…We were on holidays about four years ago. In Kelowna, at the Schoolhouse, they have a real interesting selection of fabrics. And they had all these different fat quarters and I thought, 'Oh, those are gorgeous'. They were old fashioned and I thought 'Oh, those are perfect for my piece of lace'.

"…I also have my grandmothers sewing basket. I have *no* idea how old this is. I'm not sure whether she actually made [it]. I'm sure she lined it, but I'm not sure if she didn't even weave the basket. I don't know…I haven't seen any the same. The colours on the bottom are still [vibrant], and it's simple weaving.

"…When I saw the fabric, I thought 'Oh!' (about the green especially). There was a pink, but in my mind the thing that came to me was this green with the tulips. And I thought, 'Oh, this is perfect'. It's called 'Folk-art Wedding' you know, the name of the [fabric] pattern.

"Anyhow, I brought them home and started making them into nine-patches. Got the quilt top – the squares done, I guess – and then went off to Lori's retreat and started sewing on my borders.

"…My original idea then was to put the lace on and when I came to the corner that was out of whack, I would box pleat it and tack it down so the extra lace would've been in underneath.

"…There were two ladies there and they absolutely *insisted* that I take and gather it. I kept having visions of those beautiful doilies with the sugar-lace ruffles and [I thought] 'Oh no, *no*'. They kept saying 'Just trust us! Trust us and it'll work out.'

"So I thought, 'Well, okay' so I basted down one and thought 'Well all right, that looks okay'…. I didn't measure I just sort of laid it out…. Did the next one: basted it, machined it. Did the next one…by the time I got to the last one…I just eased it in. …I *never* would have believed it!

"Once I got it on and started to quilt it, [the lace] was loose and I thought, 'That's not good' because if you hang it, it's all going to just fray. It's going to fall and it's going to catch on things. So then I kind of made little loops [with the quilting stitches to tack the edges down]."

Peggy: "Well, wouldn't your Grandma be proud!"

Sharon: "Probably…probably...It's neat because it was something that was finished basically as she was dying. A lot of work went into it…. It's a real keepsake and my daughter will have it afterwards." (I/1A/033-145)

"Those are my treasures." (I/1A/178) (Figure 58)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"...My mother has done a lot of knitting. My dad's sisters, did a little needlework. Neither of my mothers sisters did [needlework].

"...[My husband's] grandma did a *lot* of sewing. She was a very talented seamstress. Her sewing was really something. She'd go into the local dry goods store and look at the children's clothes. [Then she'd] go home and draft up her own patterns and make the kids really nice things.

"I remember seeing her quilts but the one [my husband's] mother had was just basically remnants, and probably one of the last ones. ...It's not like a treasure. I don't know who has the other ones. They're all over the province. (I/1A/265-282)

"One has the old fifty pound butter sack [fabric] as backing...it was a real heavy, heavy cotton and it say's 'fifty pounds of butter'...from the creamery in Red Deer, probably.

"...One of [my husband's] cousins is still on his maternal grandmother's family farm. Next year is the hundredth anniversary of the farm being in the family.

Peggy: "Should display the quilts at the hundredth family [celebration]."

Sharon: "That is a fabulous idea. Because [they] are planning a big deal and one of the sisters also quilted. That would be a way to...record some of these quilts." (I/1A/305-336)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"[My mother-in-law] did beautiful work. She didn't do quilts, though. She did a lot of sewing. [In the 1970's] she took a quilt class [to make a *Cathedral Windows* wall-hanging]...that's the only quilt thing [she made]...there's no batting, just folds...this one's faded a little bit, but that's okay." (I/1A/530-624)

"It hangs in our bedroom. " (I/1B/004) (Figure 59)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"[My husband] really liked the one I did for my son a few years ago. It's a log cabin [pattern] it's dark reds and bronzes, black and gold with kind of a creamy white.

"…I pulled out a bunch of magazines and said to my son, 'What appeals to you' and that was what appealed to him. …I offered, 'Would you like a quilt? What colours would you like?'…[He and his wife] had built a new home and he likes black, so he wanted something that would go. Actually it turned out really good. I'm happy with it." (I/1B/09-30)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"I tend to choose greens and golds. [The *Lonestar 2* quilt is] one of the first ones that I did."

Peggy: "That's a pretty tricky pattern to choose!"

Sharon: "For your second quilt? Yeah! (Laughs) …That's called being naïve…'Fools rush in where angels fear to tread'!

"Denise McKenna was teaching it. I'd taken her 'great start' [class]…the next thing she was doing was the *Lonestar 2* so I said, 'Well, do you think I can do it?' and she said, 'Sure'."(I/1B/36-48) (Figure 60)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"The last bunch of classes that we did was using the Bali fabrics…to do either the Bali butterfly or dragonfly and I had done the butterfly [quilt], and gave it to my mom. …But for the dragonfly one, I went and got all these pretty fabrics and there was kind of a light green and light yellow-y colour, light gold-tone. And sort of a blue-green. But I had this lovely batik that was dark green with the yellow and some brown, and it had a bit of the blue stuff through it. And I thought, 'Oh great! I can use this'. When I went to put the border on, it looked absolutely awful and I had to use the blue. I thought, 'Isn't it terrible when the quilt tells you what colour you have to use'."

Peggy: "Well at least you listened to it, though."

Sharon: "Well, you didn't have a choice." (Laughs) (I/1B/089-106)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Sharon worked on the *Monet's Star* (Figure 60) during the bee meetings, which was a new design available at Lori's Country Cottage. Lori would provide the materials for the project, and Sharon would provide the skills and time required. When complete, it would be hung in the store to promote sales of the pattern (Figure 61). It would remain there for several weeks until new patterns arrived and sales of the *Monet's Star* slowed. When the quilt was no longer required for promotion, it would become Sharon's.

This exchange of resources is common within the quilt community, and is an example of collaboration in which many people "win". Lori got low cost advertising for a current item, store patrons saw the example and could get help if needed, and Sharon would ultimately keep the quilt.

Sashing

> *Path of Light*
>
> My quilt is like life; you can't always see its beauty. Yet, as we struggle with its challenges, to our surprise out of the rubble will arise a thing of beauty. Such is this quilt. The last thing I planned to make with those 2000 squares was a color-wash quilt. (Figure 62a)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"I had just about sixty squares done. There's twenty-five squares in the block. The stars have thirty-two, but I didn't have enough yellows to keep going, or there would be more stars. I ended up with six stars, so I thought, 'Okay, so I made just about sixty blocks, now what am I going to do with these things'.

"…I had started sorting them into colours, then just started laying them out…this is where someone would really benefit from a design wall. Because I don't have a design wall, I was laying them out on my counter with twenty-five and basically going from dark to light. …I started with the darkest in the upper left… they basically went down and went across…which was fine when I had lots of one colour. (Figure 62b)

"The blues worked out not too bad, but then you ended up with really light rows and really dark rows and things that didn't go in between. Then I reached a point where that wasn't working at all…you couldn't blend them. You have no idea how many different shades, tones and whatever in between, you can get of the same colour. Like, there's purple and there's blue-purple and there's pink-purple and there's red-purple and there's purple with orange….

"…Sharon R. popped in to get our charity quilt and she gave me some ideas. Well, I tried it her way and that wasn't working, so I just thought, 'Hmm, okay, what else can I do?' so [I tried] the dark-light-dark-light kind of thing.

"…A lot of this design was arranged around 7:00 at night when you're losing the light, so what you got was a real concentration of light and dark. …It actually blends quite nicely in sort of semi-darkness because the centre part isn't nearly as intense; the value is more subtle.

"Every year the [Edmonton District Quilters] Guild (EDQG) has a challenge, and this year it was to make a quilt with two thousand squares. …But [the rules don't] say they have to be on the front of the quilt. …I will use all two thousand, but the rest of them will be on the back because my red and white checkerboards and black and white checkerboards are *not* going to [work]. (Figure 62c)

"…And I'm ending up with some blocks that are not light and they're not dark. If you put them in the dark row, they're too light. If you put them in the light row, they're too dark. I don't have enough to have a medium row. …I would just as soon have a quilt that I at least *like*, as opposed to one that's got all the squares. I'm not going to make a huge quilt just to use up the squares.

"…[EDQG] had a sign-up sheet and you donated [fabric]. I made up thirty-three bags of sixty-three different fabrics in each bag, [cut in two inch] squares. …We took them all to the guild and threw them in the bin. While the meeting went on [they were sorted]. At the end of the meeting you [took] home two thousand squares.

"…I raided my fabric [stash] a couple of times when it came to the yellow stars. I went looking because I wanted some more yellow. But you can't use the same fabric twice. …You could, but then that's not the idea of [the challenge].

"…We return them in the May meeting, and hang them at the June banquet. …One [category] is the two thousand squares. One of them is wearable - I can't imagine how you would make *anything* wearable out of those – [perhaps] a long skirt or a long dress.

"…Anyhow, it's been an experience. One of those ones that comes under 'fools rush in'." (Laughs) (I/1B/123-245)

"I'm persistent. You know when you can't leave it alone? …And I can't wait to be finished it." (I/1B/295-307)

"…This was an interesting way to get rid of [scraps], and an interesting thing to try. I'm curious to see what this will look like. I think it will be roughly forty-nine by forty-nine…a lap quilt.

"…I have no idea [about a border]. It may just be bound, but even then…I have no idea. I haven't got that far yet. (Laughs) One step at a time! …I suspect it might even be more than one colour…a brown tone for part of it and then a blue tone. I have to think about it." (I/1B/270-292)

"I won't take it to our sewing group until I have more of it done, and even then they might not see it for a while. Which is unusual because this is one time we're not going to re-arrange the blocks…no [more feedback]." (I/1B/307-321)

Peggy: "This [quilt] is not something you'd typically do. It really is a stretch…stepping out of the boundaries for you."

Sharon: "This is just totally different…and I'd rather see [the bee's] reaction when it's finished, as opposed to partially finished.

"…[We were given] strange, strange, strange colours; hard to use. Really hard to use. I'm curious to see what everybody else's quilts look like." (I/1B/333-363)

(Figure 62d) - First prize winner at EDQG June 2001.

---^---^---^---^---^---^---

The word that came to mind when I explored why Sharon H quilts, was “family”. Much of our interview consisted of stories that connected her quilts and other textiles to ancestors, and current family members. Sharon’s anecdotes brought to mind images of grandmothers and great-grandmothers. They became real, certainly more so than two-dimensional words on a document.

During our visit I admired fine needlework and touched the lace created by a dying woman. I was touched by Sharon’s intent to memorialize her grandmother by sewing her cherished albeit imperfect crocheted lace on a quilt. The grandmother seemed much more alive, and when I looked into her antique sewing basket I felt slightly guilty for trespassing.

Sharon’s quilt stories were like a genealogical patchwork. She pointed out patterns and interesting textures in the characters, and followed threads connecting one family to another. By creating her own quilts to share with her children and grandchildren, Sharon is contributing to the family patchwork. (Figures 63 to 66)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---

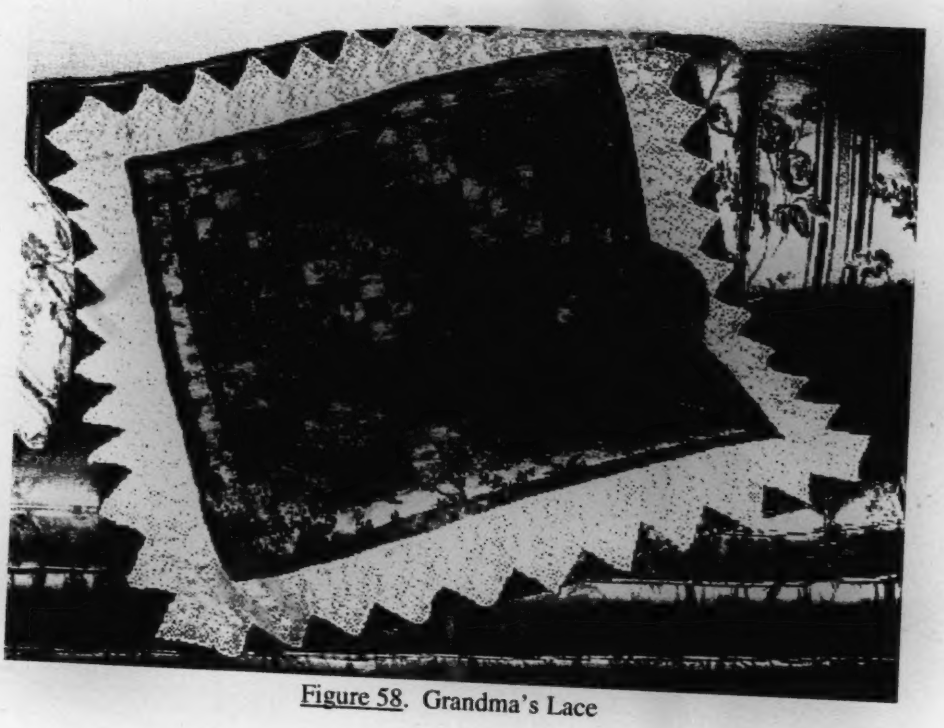


Figure 58. Grandma's Lace

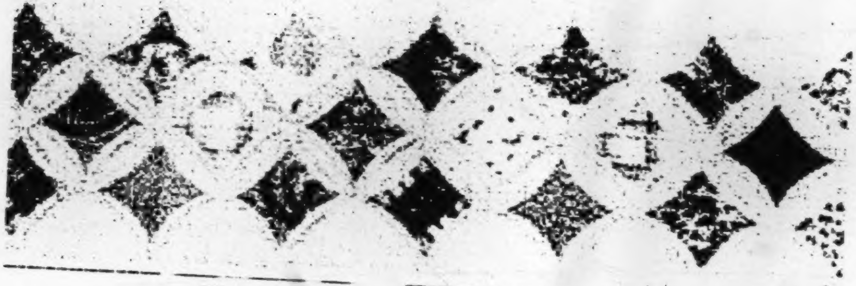


Figure 59. Cathedral Windows by Edna H.

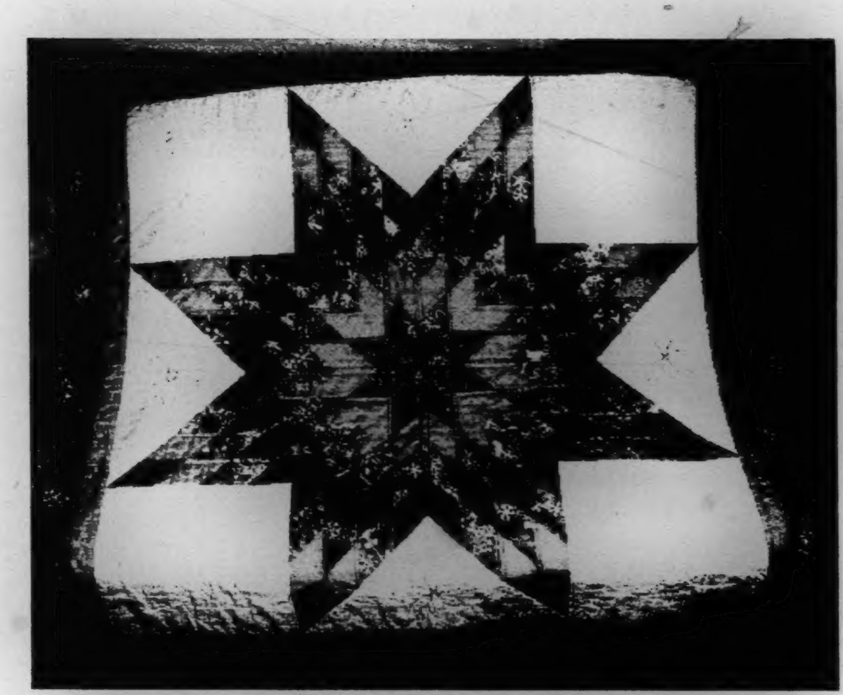


Figure 60. Lonestar 2

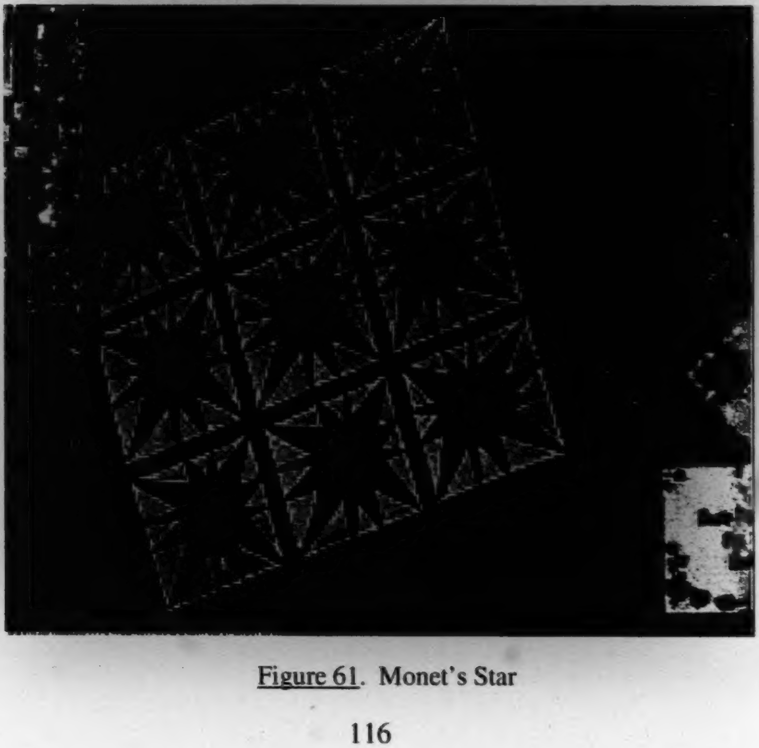


Figure 61. Monet's Star

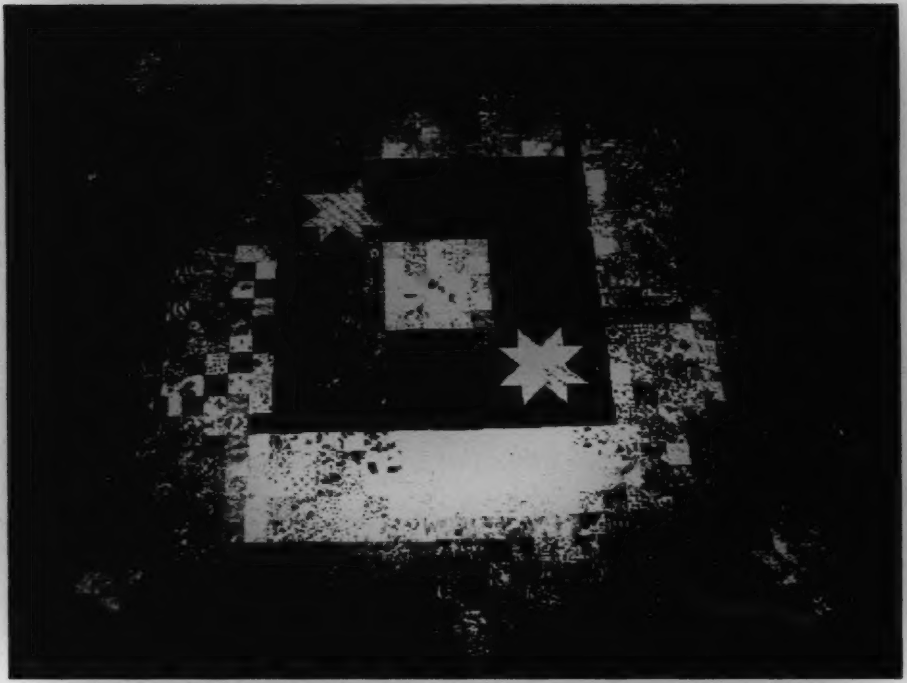


Figure 62a. Path of Light - front

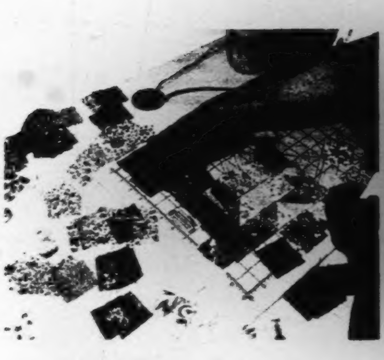


Figure 62b. Arranging Squares

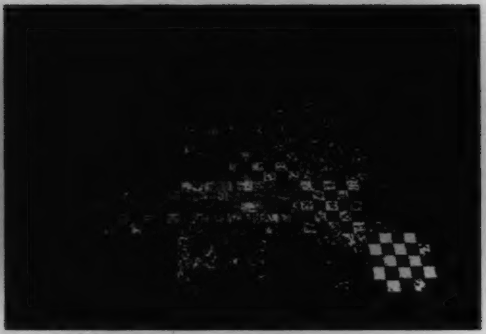


Figure 62c. Path of Light - back

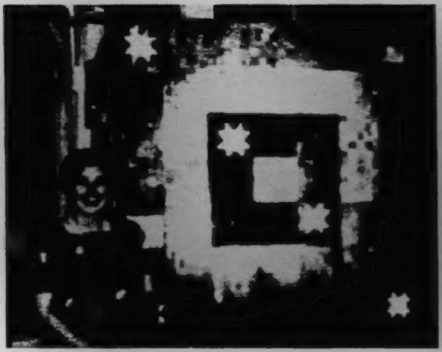


Figure 62d. EDQG winner June, 2001

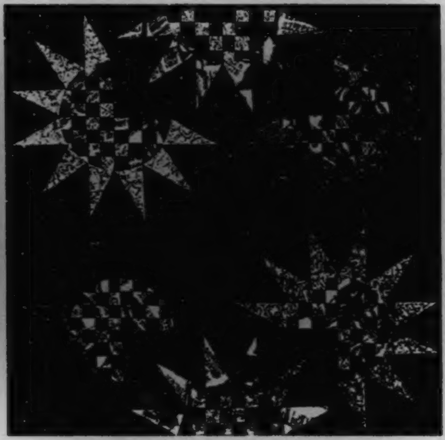


Figure 63. Suns on Black

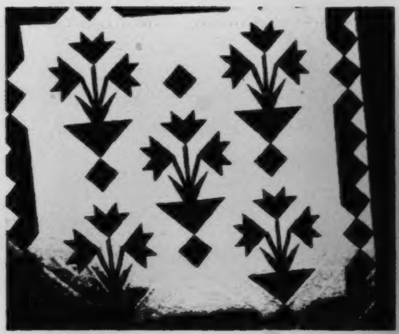


Figure 64. Carolina Lily

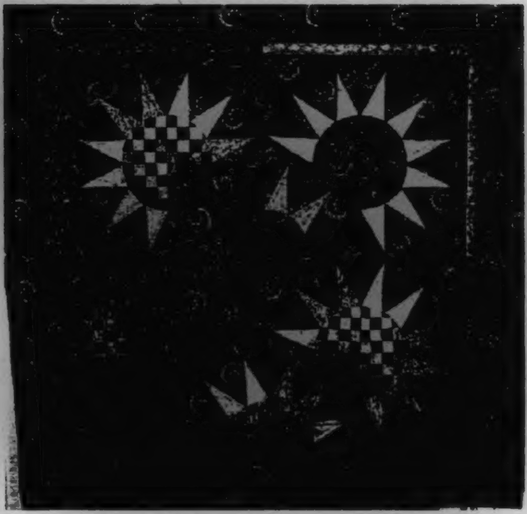


Figure 66. Suns on Blue

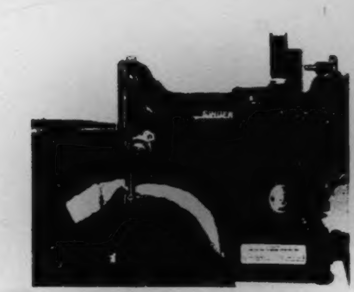
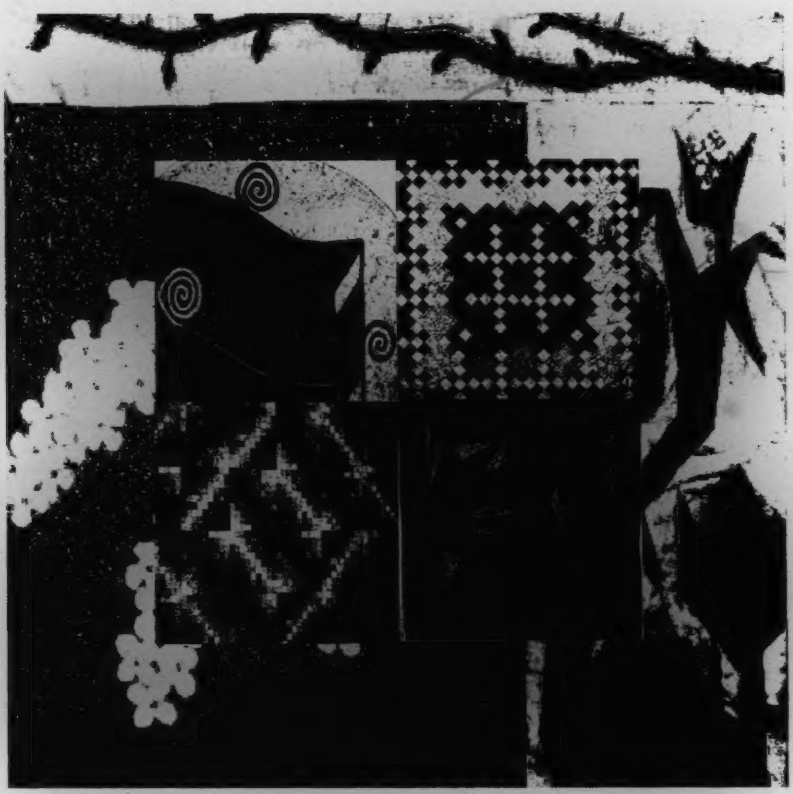


Figure 65. Still Sewing

Figure 67. **Sharon R's Virtual Block**



"I guess [quilting] is just like so many other things in life: When you're ready for the message, you get it. And it just hits home, dead on."
Sharon R.

"I got [my first quilt pattern *Washington Sidewalk* out of a magazine. It's just a block and I thought, 'You know, I'll bet you I can do this'." So, I just dug around and found whatever - I think I had polyester something or other. I had no idea how to make a quilt.

"I just wanted to make the block, because I thought, 'That's kind of neat the way the fabric *works*'. You use different fabrics with different… design features in them, and you know, the block does stuff! It comes forward or it goes back or the rest of it comes forward or whatever.

"…And I was amazed! People make thirty of these to put on a quilt. Oh, *that* would be boring (Laughs)!" (I/1A/313-332) (Figure 68)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"I remember when I was a kid, my dad used to build stuff. I remember when he built our fence. I mean it was a work of art and I used to sit for hours downstairs and watch him. …In the wintertime he built this fence and it was like a louvered fence.

"He didn't have any power tools. He used a chisel and he cut all the little grooves in the top rail and the bottom rail where you set all the pickets. They were at an angle, and he carved them all out by hand, and I'd just sit there and watch him. …I was a little kid and he was working on this fence.

"In the spring he put the fence up and everyone came to admire this fence. …[The project was like quilting in that he was] working carefully, [but] he didn't have colour considerations. It was white, but it was just the workmanship." (I/1A/597-626) (Figure 69)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"[In the 1970's in Charlottetown, fibre artist] Joyce Wieland was doing different things, and she wanted to express her nationalism in her art. She chose *quilting* as the medium, and the one quilt that I remember said 'I love Canada' on it…but it was *pink*. …I think it might have been polyester/cotton or something – it had a bit of a sheen to it – but it was art! And it was meant to be touched." (I/2A/260-276)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"For a while I used to think [I] should really be making traditional quilts and just get that solid grounding, and *then* break the rules. But you know, that's *not* what I want to do. I made some traditional quilts. I even made a *queen* sized traditional quilt, called *Bourgogne Surrounded.*

"…It was a guild challenge one year. I just made the top from four blocks which are quite large because they have a lot of pieces in them. When you set them together then you can see the diagonal lines running through each block. …It went together really quickly and I was having fun with it, and I thought, 'Oh, I quite like *this*'. So, I ended up making it queen sized." (I/1A/111-127) (Figure 70)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Sharon R: "My touchstone quilt is this *Lady in the Hourglass* here. It was after I took that class from Judy M., that I decided I needed to have more time for quilting. Why am I working five days a week anyway? So, I negotiated a four-day week. …Here's something I *really* enjoy doing, but I don't have nearly enough time to do it…. And it's been great…I see a lot of people making those kinds of choices.

"…This is the first quilt I made with a theme, which is being 'pressed for time'. That was the idea that I took to the workshop – I wanted to have more time for quilting. But I made this quilt top, and the more I worked on it the more I thought, 'Well, I can take this one step further – I don't have to work five days a week'. I can work less and have more time for doing the things I enjoy, including quilting. (I/1B/01-27) (Figure 71)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"I wanted to make [the *Learned Smiles* quilt (Figure 72)] *edgy*, that's why I used red. But with the sharp points it was too regular and controlled, and I wanted to do something irregular. So that's why I put the gold [metallic thread] on. To show the tension." (AT/1B/189-192)

"The story behind the quilt is that it was a challenge piece. The challenge was, 'Is nine-patch art?' This red part here is a double nine-patch. There are nine triangles in each square, and the squares are arranged as a nine patch. So, it's a double nine-patch. The idea was that I was expressing anger and frustration and anxiety, because last spring I was feeling really upset about my work situation. I just thought, 'Yeah, I'm just going to stitch that into here'. But all the quilting became very *controlled* – and I was thinking, 'Yeah, all that anger, all that frustration, it was kind of under control'.

"Actually, it was being held down. Because you've got to go to work everyday, you've got to get along with these people and you don't like the decisions that they're making. They're impacting on you in a negative way. You've got to keep it all under control, right? So that's what all these smiles are around the border. All of this anger is all kind of *kept in there*, in these nice little neat borders, with these smiles, and they're all kind of hanging in there together.

"That's what I was thinking – this is what we do, this is how we behave. We're not supposed to fly off the handle. We're not supposed to scream and yell. We're not supposed to protest every second thing that happens to us. You just kind of swallow and think, 'Okay, give this time. Think this through'.

"So [the judges] comment was (reading), 'Vibrant colours call out for recognition. No smiling cover-up here'. (Pauses, thinking) …This quilt piece itself is not a smiling cover-up. I suppose that's what she meant. Does that make sense to you? …It's not a reflection of my behavior. It's a reflection of what I was feeling. The smiles are the cover-up. But in this piece here, there's no cover-up because the red is just so bold. I guess that's what she meant." (I/1B/201-243)

"For me, I see [competitions] as an education. This is what I'm trying to do, and you never know how close you are to the mark until you get the feedback. I guess I was on the mark. Now that I look at this and just talking to you about it, I see that I was successful: 'No smiling cover-up here'. Meaning, the *quilt* is not a smiling cover-up. The quilt is an expression of all this anger, and emotion that was being contained." (1B/243-250)

"I wanted the lips to be more prominent; more obvious. I didn't necessarily want them to be so subtle.

"…I wanted to tie the red embroidery here – the lips – to what's going on in the middle of the quilt. So I knew I wanted to use red. And the red has reasonably good contrast against the yellow, but it's just too close to the purple.

"…I don't remember who I was joking about with this but, if this is to be my 'series starter', then the next one has to be different. After the action is taken to resolve this anger, then what do you do? …It won't be red, or at least it won't be heavy duty red in the middle (laughs). It'll have more blues and greens in it."

Peggy: "More calm…"

Sharon: "That's right. Someone made the comment, 'The next quilt wouldn't have so much red', or 'It wouldn't be so strong'. It would be a reflection of what I was feeling after all this anxiety was resolved.

"…But thinking about it, it's not really gone. …This quilt was finished in February. It's not that long ago. And I knew there is still some anger, and it's going to take a while to be *totally* gone.

"…Things that I didn't react to, or that I just kept under wraps before, I'll just say something right now. It's like, 'Hold it'. I'm going to speak up. I'm not going through this again. I think about what I could have done to communicate not only what I was feeling, but also some solutions. I can think about some solutions and present them and see if I could help to make the situation better for myself."

Peggy: "So now you're doing that?"

Sharon: "Well, I switched jobs."

Peggy: "Oh did you? Oh, okay, I didn't realize that."

Sharon: (laughs) "Yeah. …It was really hard to go through what I went through last spring. Actually [a friend] and I chatted about it one day when we were at a bee meeting. I was working in the kitchen because there was no room in the sewing room (laughs). …She came to do something in the kitchen and we started chatting, and she'd had a similar work experience. So we started feeding on each other (laughs). Oh yeah, all that anger. …I suppose it's true. [The anger] doesn't ever really goes away. You know you were burned…for her it was many years ago. For me it was just last year.

Peggy: "It's a fresh wound…a large gaping wound. The fact that it's taking up so much space on the quilt."

Sharon: "Yeah. I guess I never thought of it as a wound."

Peggy: "I mean, this 'anger' takes up a very large portion of this wall-hanging."

Sharon: "Oh yeah. My husband deserves a medal for living with me all those months (laughs). Just putting all these reds together and thinking, 'What is this meaning?'"

Peggy: "But [our quilter friend] didn't have an outlet like [quilting] at that time…and she could have used it."

Sharon: "I think we could all use some kind of outlet. The fact that quilting can *be* that outlet is very helpful." (1B/253-335)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"[I would like to do] a series based on technique, or a theme like the anger, anxiety. Like this one here (refers to *Squeezed for Time*). …you go through a series of emotions and then you illustrate those in a series of quilts." (I/1A/219-232) (Figure 73)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"Sometimes you just need a 'no-brainer'. Just feel the fabric…hear the sewing machine. Just get your fix." (I/1A/413-416)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Peggy: "That little mini quilt I'm piecing right now…I thought well, I'm gonna just use basically values, but I'm going to use the light ones and then the darker value's. I chose mostly whatever dark shades of green I could find, and burgundy. But of course the burgundy turned into magenta's and purple and into scarlets, and almost orange in some cases. Because orange and purple, being complementary, I thought 'Okay....'

Sharon: "Where are we going now...?"

Peggy: " ...I even have some real scarlets - scarlets and oranges...here and there, and it snaps it right up!"

Sharon: "That one at the top of the stairs...the challenge piece with the orange in it. I had read and heard that when you have a problem fabric, one way to work with it is to use more of that colour or similar colours, so that your problem fabric doesn't stand out. ...So you kind of mix it in...you use more. Just use more!" (I/1B/120-146) (Figure 74)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"I can start new, saner habits with quilt projects. ...I'm a last-minute person. I have done a few things in my life where I was early, [but] it didn't have the same excitement (laughs). That little frenzy, you know?

"...It probably makes it easier for those people who have to put up with you if you're not always rushing at the last minute." (I/1B/427-443)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"With artists [risk-taking is] just a given. You're working outside of the norm...it's your expression...your interpretation. You don't want it to look like someone else has made it, obviously. That's probably the highest insult, 'Oh, that looks like a so-and-so style'. I did say that to someone once and I didn't realize what I had done until afterwards, and she was so devastated (laughs). (I/1B/35-54)

"...But I think it's like anything else: if you think you're doing something creative, and personal or unique...there's always a bit of humility when you find that somebody else has already done it. But you know what? That's just part of living. Just because someone's been down that path before, doesn't make it any less legitimate or valuable to *you*. It just means you're not the first one down that path.

That's fine if someone's been down that path. This is *my* first time down this path and this is how I'm choosing to interpret it, and that's legitimate. Someone will come after me and do something similar." (I/1B/54-85)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Sashing

"My favorite quilt was a real toss-up between [*Squeezed for Time*]... and this round robin quilt, which I get so many compliments on. The thing about this one is [it] was a big risk. When I went to Quilt Canada in Saskatoon, one of the classes I took was about round robin quilts. It was quite interesting because the woman who taught the course is a very accomplished quilter, and she had been in a round robin with some other accomplished quilters. Those quilts were quite large, and they were hung in the dining hall so every meal that we had at the conference, we were looking at these *wonderful* round robin quilts. They were just exquisite...they [had] so much *action*. They were traditional round robin in that everyone made a square that went in the middle.

"...The round robin part of it is that each person contributes to the quilt. So everyone who agrees to be in the round robin...makes a block to start and they pass it on to the next person in the round robin. So there's an order for passing on...you make a block that goes in the middle, and then you pass it on. And then *you* get one from someone else, so you add a border.

"...When you get the package in the mail, because sometimes these are international...then you look at it and you decide, well what are the guidelines if there are any for the round robin. The one she was in was just to add a border. So you would add on four sides.

"...I think there were seven people in the round robin, so there was a center and seven borders. And each one would be different. Some of them were applique, some of them were intricate piecework, some of them were wonderful fabric hand-dye.... These round robins take place over a year or eighteen months or whatever....

"…In the class that I took…there were nine people, we organized ourselves geographically. Four of us live in Western Canada, so we decided we were going to do a round robin together. (Shows me the journal she kept.)

"…On the drive home I was thinking, 'What am I going to make for my center block?'. I'm looking and thinking 'Oh, this landscape will inspire me' or 'The chit-chat in the car will inspire me' or 'Something will inspire me'. It wasn't until I got home and I walked into the backyard, that I saw our Mayday tree. It was blooming and blooming and it was *so* fragrant and it was *so* beautiful. And I thought, 'That's it. That's it!'. It's the Mayday tree.

"So this is my Mayday tree right here. This is raw-edge applique and I stitched these little beads on…now I would use hand-dye for the branches…So I made this my first block.

"…And I sent it on to the next person. She put on the butterflies and the tulips…. We knew in advance that we would have this format…[the next quilter] made this [vertical] panel…kind of does this paper piecing without a pattern. She's *quite* incredible. …Then it went to [the third quilter and she] made these robins and thought 'There's no way the robins are going on the bottom' [which was the original plan]. They have to go on the top, heralding the spring.

"…I wrote in my book that I was inspired by the Mayday tree blooming in the spring. And since the book goes with the quilt, everyone adds to it. …I had a lot to say obviously [flipping through the journal]…. We had *so* much fun together in the class and we went to the bar afterwards. Well, I think it was the first time that [one quilter], who's quite elderly, had been in a bar! We had *so* much fun! (I/2A/34-104)

"But round robins can be heartbreakers. If you don't know the skill level or the design level of the people in your round robin, then you're taking a risk." (I/2A/183-187)

"Well you know, it's *just* a quilt and I'm really pleased, *really* pleased with the way mine turned out, and it's my 'April quilt'. I try to put a new quilt up in the kitchen there every month.

"…I get the 'place of honour'. As soon as people walk in the house the first thing they see is the quilt on the wall." (I/2A/206-216) (Figure 75)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Sharon R's work is unique and artistic which reflects her ability to work intuitively. She uses quilting to explore ideas through her recursive, heuristic journeys. Sharon R has confronted and resolved issues such as frustration with work and time limitations. Quilting helps her educe understanding of common, everyday problems. Her intention to work on series' of quilts with common themes indicates her ability to better understand her environment though patchwork.

Sharon R. and Faye thought that they would first learn to make traditional quilts, then move on to "artistic" designs. Sharon R. believed she should have developed a better grounding in traditional quilting before she got more creative. (Figure 76 to Figure 79) Soon, both became aware that patchwork was not a linear process. A quilter develops the artform as he or she pleases, and in doing so learns about personal strengths and limitations.

Quilting creates a heightened awareness of being in relation to one's environment. Even though it is self-directed, all aspects of patchwork must relate to all other aspects. Context matters. When daily life can not be understood in linear, logical and scientific ways, creative and aesthetic approaches may reveal new possibilities. Sharon R. found that she can "play" with patchwork, make important discoveries, and fabricate a more meaningful life.

Sharon R's approach to quilting paralleled my research process, because both involved multiple symbolic systems and application of tacit knowledge. Her insights helped me to better understand how quilting can be a way of exploring and creating meaning.

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

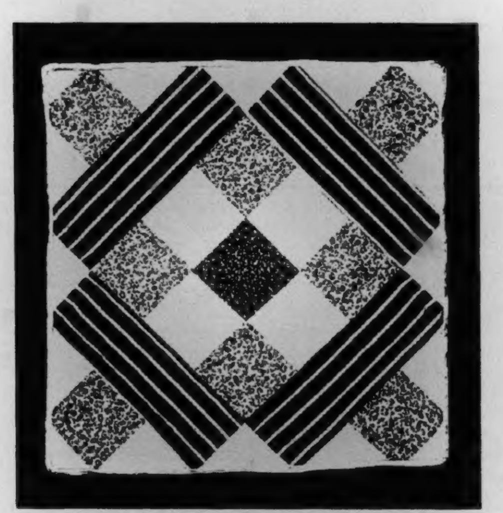


Figure 68. Washington Sidewalk

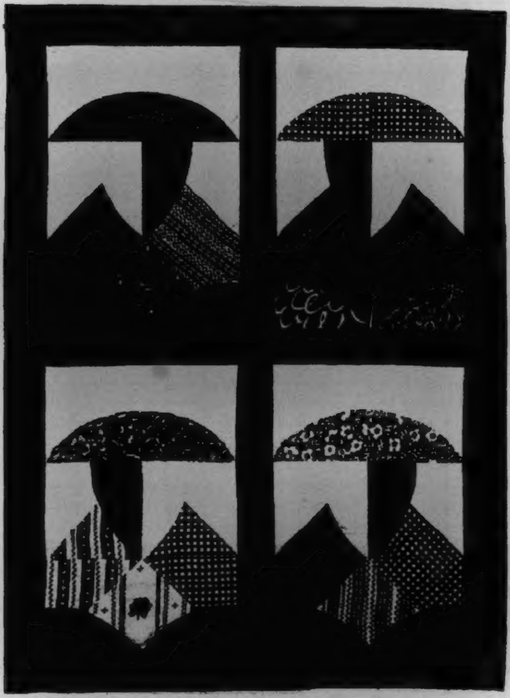


Figure 69. Black, White and Thread

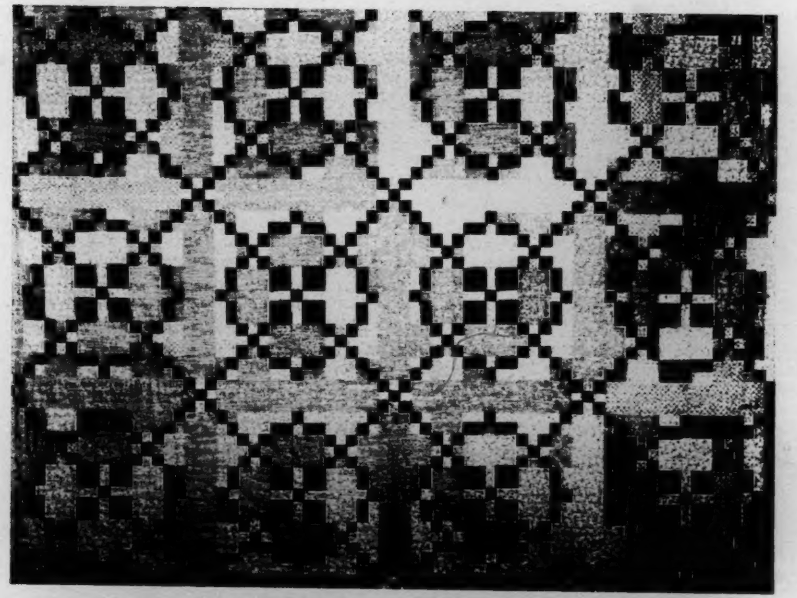


Figure 70. Bourgogne Surrounded - detail

Figure 71. Squeezed for Time

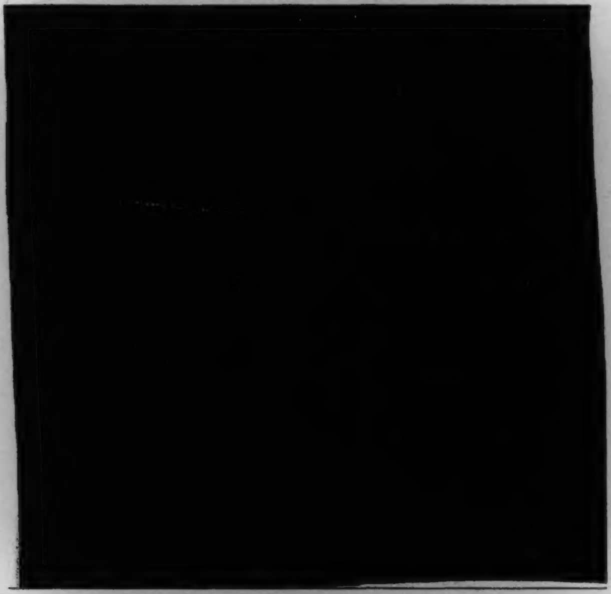


Figure 72. Learned Smiles

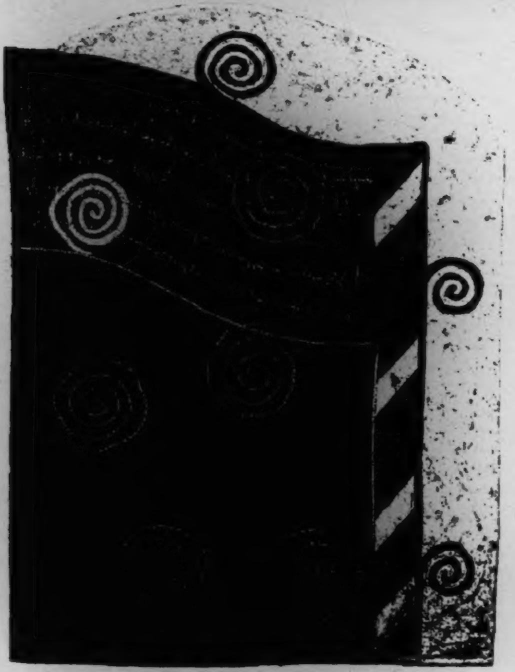


Figure 73. Life is Change

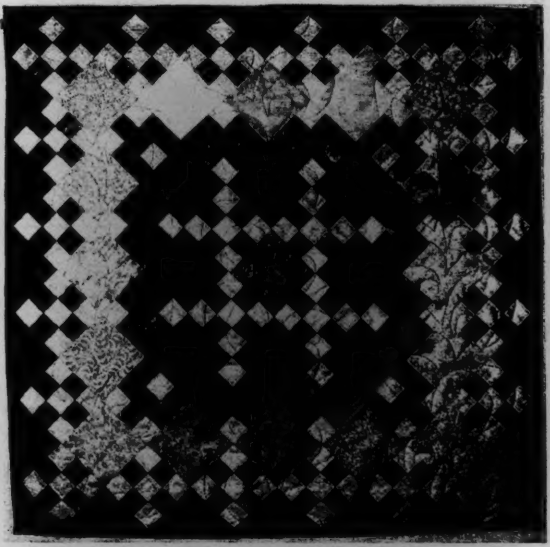


Figure 74. Orange Peels on Linoleum

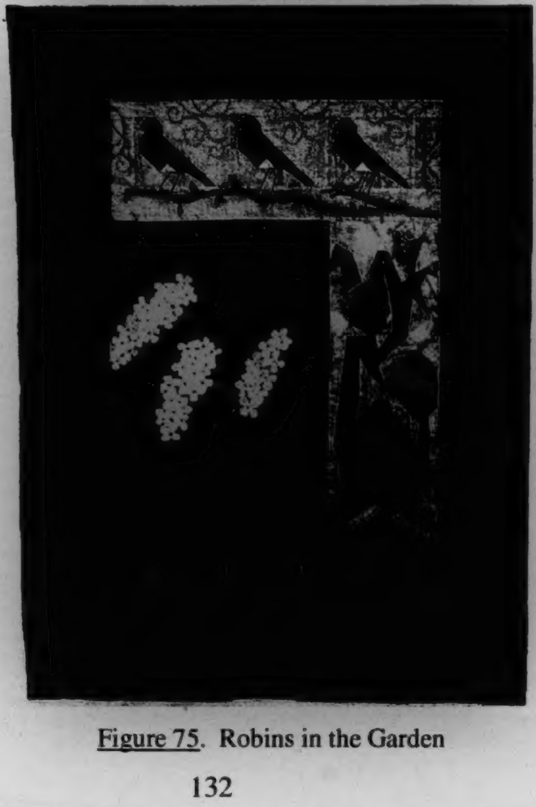


Figure 75. Robins in the Garden

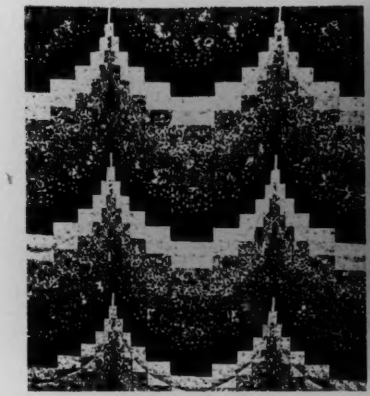


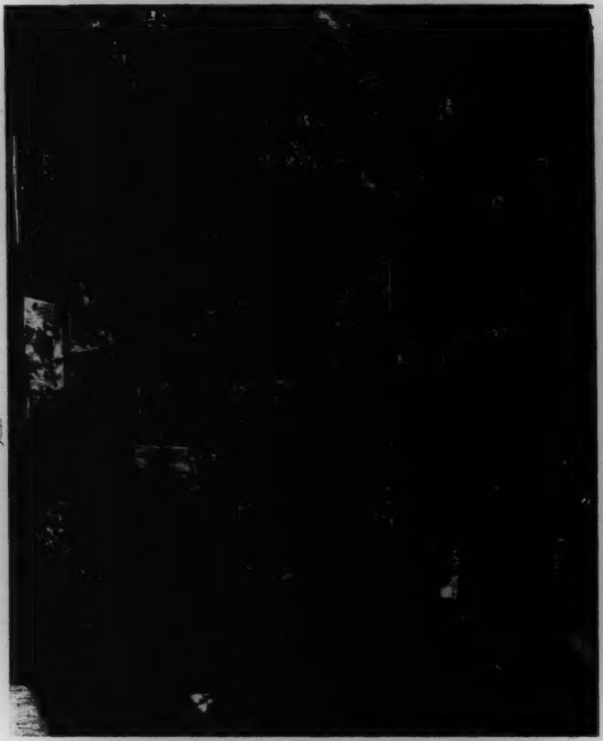
Figure 76. Bargello

Figure 77. Stars on Black

Figure 78. Tropical Nocturne

Figure 79. Watercolour Butterfly

Figure 80. ***Gift of the Magi***



"All the members of our quilting bee have shared the fear and suffering of family members or friends who have had breast cancer. Our quilt – The Gift of the Magi – is our expression of support for those who struggle with this frightening disease, and our contribution toward finding a cure. We chose the radiant beauty of batik prints to underscore the strength of the Magic Tiles design. The magic lies in the connectedness of women in all aspects of breast cancer - in taming fear, in finding strength in friendships, in suffering the loss of everyday living, in providing physical and emotional comfort, in supporting one another through the triumphs and the losses. The bond we feel prompts us to reach out not only to family and friends, but to people we don't know and will never meet, and to let them know that we care."

Sharon R. on behalf of the bee

Inner Border

"[Quilting is] a strange thing that brings people together.... For the first few years I quilted all on my own, and I enjoyed it too, so I obviously enjoyed quilting. But then it's something totally different when you bring all these people and guilds and little quilt groups all together. It just adds something else to the whole idea of quilting" (Faye I/1A/410-420).

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

The inner border is the *Gift of the Magi* quilt (Figure 80) which was created by the collaborative efforts of the bee. Their statement reflects the connectedness they feel as women and quilters under the shadow of breast cancer. This section of text highlights aspects of membership in the group created by the research participants. The bee has a separate identity, yet it is permeable to the flow of relationships and issues.

Members shared the various tasks to complete the *Gift of the Magi* that would be donated to raise money for the 2001 Canadian Breast Cancer Support Project: The Quilt. During that time they shared their own stories about breast cancer, which underscored the importance of the charity. Everyone had a story, so putting names and faces together with the disease made it more personal.

The *Gift of the Magi* also represents individual quilters because without them there would be no bee. At the beginning of the research, the quilt was used to draw me into the group. I was given the task of sewing on the sleeve for the rod used to hang the quilt. I was suddenly included in the context of the bee, at least for the time being while the research was underway. The *Gift of the Magi* was an active site for linking individuals to the group, each other, and the broader community via the charity.

The *Gift of the Magi* represents Canadian quilters because it was made for the 2001 Canadian Breast Cancer Support Project: The Quilt.

> [The quilt] has for hundreds of years, been protecting women from loneliness, depression and isolation. The very art is a survivor, which can be traced to ancient Egypt. The quilts themselves, well used and well loved, often survive a hundred years or more, each stitch a testament to the power of women working together, supporting each other in a common goal. …And so the idea for an exhibit and auction was born to support survivors and to support the research that helps them to survive.
>
> (http://www.thequilt.com, retrieved September 21, 2001)

Three hundred and fifty one quilts were donated, mostly from across Canada. One hundred percent of the money raised went to the Canadian Cancer Society office nearest to the donor of each quilt. The bee's *Gift of the Magi* is an example of the quilt community's commitment to physical and social well-being.

The bee proudly showed me the final brochure in which the *Gift of the Magi* was one of a small number of quilts chosen to be auctioned, rather than raffled. Not only was it an honour to have it selected, but the quilt would likely earn more money than if it were raffled. This recognition boosted the group's esteem, and seemed to empower them. Through individual efforts and group cooperation, the bee contributed to a worthy cause, and gained recognition in return.

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Before the first session at Ellen's house I had set up recording equipment: lights, microphones, black boxes and wires. I felt awkward and guilty for introducing all these foreign objects into their environment. As they arrived, the quilters may have sensed my anticipation. After she chose her spot at the table, Gail handed me the *Gift of the Magi* quilt they were working on. She told me that since one group member was missing that day, it was up to me to sew the sleeve (used for hanging) on the back. Sharon H. nodded and smiled suggesting she had discussed this with Gail earlier. It was a signal indicating that they were okay with the research and I felt relieved. Contributing to the quilt was my right of passage. In spite of the intrusive technology and my purpose for being present, I was being welcomed into the group. (G1/VT1/3:55)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Gail: "Last year [the Breast Cancer Support Project] produced a book of all the quilts that were in the show. This was the travelling show. They go on display starting May first and it's November when they're auctioned off. They produced this little booklet that had picture and the artist's statement of every quilt that was in the show. Then they had a letter attached saying how much money had been raised off the sale of the quilts. I think they had a hundred eighty quilts last year? They have 300 this year."

Peggy: "Do you recall how much money they made last year?"

Sharon H: "It was a lot of money…Several hundred thousand [dollars]."

Gail: "The money made off of *our* quilt will come back to Edmonton. It doesn't stay in the central office or anything. It comes back to the area from where the quilt was donated." (AT/1B/77-99)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---

When they first began meeting, the women discussed a name for their group. They called themselves the "bee"[1] – narrowly voting out "hive" after some debate. When I heard about their choice, I remember thinking that I preferred "hive", which meant a gathering of wise women.

By naming themselves, the group created an identity and a boundary between what was private and what was public. Within the group setting, the quilters discuss a wide range of issues. Each woman tends to speak her mind and trusts that conversations will be kept private. Mutual respect is necessary to build and maintain a supportive environment.

The "bee" was acceptable until they realized that the name might become public knowledge. They wanted the moniker to remain within the boundaries of the group because it might be taken out of context. They had chosen the saucy name in a very tongue-in-cheek manner and did not want anyone to think they were serious. Their intentions might be misunderstood, and would not be representative of the cultural philosophy of goodness. The problem compounded when someone pointed out that the name was also on *The Gift of the Magi* label. In both scenarios, the colourful name was going public, possibly creating an image that some might find offensive.

---

[1] The actual names were omitted at the request of the group. "Bee" and "hive" are replacements.

Alternatives were discussed but none were agreed upon. The group wanted a name that would not be a source of stress, but rather what Boyden (1986) calls a "melior" (In Bubolz & Sontag, 1993, p. 433). Melior refers to an environmental characteristic that maintains a positive image and sense of well-being. All the bee members agreed that quilters were a caring people, and they wanted a name to fit more closely with this positive image.

I too, struggled with the name of the "bee". I wanted to use their original name, but the group did not want it to be public knowledge. Guild members and others already knew the name so what was the objection? It was clear by their discussions that I could not use their name and would have to find an alternative. I tried many terms: group, clan, sect, coven, clique, and quilters but none were authentic. To appease the participants I resorted to "bee" and "hive" although they were generic and non-descript.

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Ellen: (Had just ended a phone call) "The kids phone and say, 'Is the [hive] there?'" (She laughs. The group seems amused.)

Peggy: "The [hive] or the bee?"

Ellen: [My husband] calls us the [hive] because he doesn't think there's enough of us to be a bee."

Peggy: "I prefer [hive], actually."

Faye: "Bee does sound a little…."

Peggy: "Ominous?"

Sharon H: "Actually, that was something Gail and I talked about. We decided, and you can take this part out, because we have said we don't mind our names being used but we don't want the 'bee'...we don't want to have a name. We're just 'us'.... We're just a group of ladies who sew together. So when you go through [the research tapes] you're going to have to beep [that word out]."

[Faye nods. Ellen is listening from the kitchen out of view of the camera.]

Sharon H: "Well, it can [sound] negative. It's one thing if it's just ourselves."

Gail: "We were always going to change that."

Faye: "Well, it's so hard to do once you've found a name."

Peggy: "[The name] works for me."

[Faye goes back to preparing fabric.]

Ellen: "I have a comment about the name. Do you know that it's on this [paperwork] that's going to [the Breast Cancer Support Project]?"

Faye: (surprised) "The [word] 'bee' is?"

Peggy: "Yeah, it's on the quilt [label] too."

Sharon H: "I thought we had actually taken that off."

[The women discuss this for a moment. Ellen shows them the papers.]

Peggy: "Does that mean I still have to 'beep' it out?"

Sharon H: "Yes."

Peggy: "All right...."

[There is discussion about how to remove the name.]

Faye: "Oh well, we know we don't mean anything by it."

Peggy: "I'm surprised you couldn't agree [earlier] to change it...formally."

Gail: "There's nothing formal about us. It doesn't need to be formal."

Peggy: "Well, just when you're signing things like this quilt."

Faye: "This is the first thing we've ever signed."

Sharon H: "Yeah!" (All laugh)

Ellen: "They don't want to advertise."

Peggy: (Joking) "You can call yourselves 'anonymous', then."

Sharon H: (to Gail) "How strongly do you feel about [leaving the name in print]? Any thoughts about taking it out?"

Gail: "Well that's already been faxed and I don't know if they've produced the book already."

Sharon H: "[We could] just enclose a note."

Gail: "And the label…I don't know where it's used."

Ellen: "I think it's in the same place [as on the paper]. On the quilt it's the same explanation."

Sharon H: "Then it would say, 'All the members of our quilting bee have shared…'." [Indicates it would sound okay without the offending word.]

Faye: "It's on the computer, right? So you just have to redo the label."

Sharon H: "[The quilt] has to be mailed tomorrow."

Gail: "It's supposed to be there for April first."

Faye: "I'm not sure I'd want to buy a quilt that was made by a 'bee'."

Sharon H: "Yeah."

Peggy: "Really?"

Ellen: "It does [not have] good connotations."

Peggy: "I know, but…."

Sharon H: "That simply was the time that we did it…."

Gail: "Unfortunately, none of us read it carefully enough before [it was printed]."

Sharon H: "I don't see why we couldn't just cross this out and put a note with it saying…."

Faye: "If [Sharon R.] will just print out another [label], I'll run over tonight…."

Peggy: "Yeah (reading), if you just took 'bee' off [it would be better]."

[Conversation drifts to another topic for a moment.]

Faye: "I would take this [label] off and re-do it…."

Ellen: "Well, how are you going to change [the paperwork]?"

Sharon H: "You'd just include a note [and] ask them to please pull up the other one and black that out."

Faye: "Do you want me to do that?"

Gail: "I'm not…I have no time to do it. I'm not making any decisions. You guys want to change it, go for it."

Faye: (to Gail) "You would rather it be changed?"

Gail: "I don't particularly like that name. I never did. Why we left it for so long…none of us paid attention to it."

Peggy: “Around [this] table is one thing, but if it goes further that’s something else.”

Faye: (nodding) “Yeah, but others don’t know [we’re joking]. But it says, ‘Made by a bee’. No…(shakes head indicating she does not like the term).”

[All agree.]

Ellen: “[Others may wonder] ‘What *do* they believe?’”

Peggy: “Exactly.”

Ellen: (joking) “And do they make human sacrifices?”

Faye: (laughing) “Yeah they do…you!”

Ellen: (laughing) “Yeah! I’m on the sacrificial altar quite frequently!”

Faye: (changing subject) “Should I pour the tea now?”

(G1/VT2/321-387)

(The following week:)

Sharon H: “Actually, I thought of a name for our group…(slowly) ‘The Crafty Quilters’!”

(Peels of laughter from everyone. Someone says, ‘Gail…’, because everyone knows she dislikes being called crafty.)

Gail: “You just go for it.”

Faye: “Oh, that’s good!”

(Someone suggests ‘C-squared’.)

Gail: “Not quite…’C-*cubed*’…. ‘Crafty Quilters’, well let’s see now….“

Faye: “I think that’s cute.”

Ellen: “I think that’s awfully cute.”

Someone: “There’s a deeper meaning to [Crafty Quilters].

Faye: “That’s why I liked it.” (More laughter from everyone.)

(G2/1B/430-448)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

As the study progressed, I realized I was a researcher first, and a quilter second. This became problematic because discussions were often guarded and boundary issues arose. During the research there were negotiations about who was allowed inside the group boundaries and who was not.

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

(Gail and Faye work on the floor at Ellen's.)

Gail: "Who's got dark thread? (Looks at Ellen)…in your machine? We can just run down [to your sewing room]…."

Ellen: (Surprised) "Oh no, you can't 'just run down'! You need to sign a release first! (All laugh.)

Gail: "Then *you* can run down!" (VT/G1/00:06)

(Everyone is helping Faye select fabrics for her next project. There are several possibilities from which to choose. One in particular is very promising, but Faye only has a small piece. Ellen says she had some of that fabric once.)

Gail: "Time to go down to Ellen's stash." (Everyone grins.)

Ellen: (Takes fabric and prepares to go downstairs.) "I don't know if I used this [all up] or not."

Gail: (grinning) "I think we should go help her."

(Gail and Faye follow Ellen.)

Camera operator: "Should I go down? That might not be in the contract with Ellen, right?"

Peggy: "Yeah."

(The camera operator tried to follow but was stopped. She ultimately stayed upstairs.) (VT/G1/2:10-2:24)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

These women have developed a safe environment that mirrors their values and beliefs. The group philosophy is based on ethics of care and support. Belenky et al write, "…ideas and values, like children, must be nurtured, cared for, placed in environments that help them grow" (1986, p. 152). In many ways they are like a family. They challenge each other, but do so gently often using humour.

Membership in this small group provides opportunities to participate in one's own learning. Psychotherapist Michael Mahoney (1996) writes that the evolution of ideas occurs when one is actively engaged in exploration with others. This group interacts by questioning, discussing alternatives, and reflecting on one's own thoughts. The quilters are encouraged to speak and to state their opinions. They have created room for voice and a sounding board for ideas. Sharing experiences as they do, is a hallmark of connected knowing (ibid).

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"We were talking about the quilt for [a mutual quilter friend], and one of the things that I did was to make the label. And, Faye and I have this little argument going on – she loves folk art quilts – when I won the quilt in the Earthly Goods [annual fund raiser] raffle…I bought one ticket, and I won the quilt, and it was a folk art quilt. …Faye just adored this quilt; she just loved this quilt. …She just thought it was *such* a shame (I'm not a great lover of folk art) and I won this lovely folk art quilt. (Laughs) Well of course, since winning it I have developed quite an appreciation for folk art.

"When it came time to make the label for [the friend's] quilt, I was poking around and I found a book about *angel* quilts. And I thought, 'Oh, isn't this wonderful' you know, this angel could be delivering a message to [our friend] from the rest of [the bee]. So, I made a folk art angel and I appliqued her on the back. Then I made a bunch of hearts, and I put our names on all the hearts, and they were kind of floating up the side of the quilt. And I just…had *so* much fun doing that….

"Here she is [shows the angel pattern piece]. ...So I had to cut out her hair, and her halo, and her dress, and her hands and her feet, and her shoes and the whole bit. It was quite a fussy little thing to put together. She was a lot of fun. …[Faye] figured I was human after all because I do like folk art!" (Laughs) (Sharon R. I/2A/02-32)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"When the [bee] gets together, we have fun poking fun at each other and joking about each other's shortcomings.

"…I tease [Ellen because she thinks] I'm too artsy. She says, 'Why do you have to make a quilt with a message?' (Laughs) You *don't* have to make a quilt with a message if you don't *want* to, but you know, if you want to well, there it is! …She thinks there's too much 'head stuff' going on in those intellectual quilts." (Sharon R. 1B/085-120)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Ellen: "I was putting the binding on and I thought to myself, 'Oh shoot, I forgot to do this other line here' (gestures)…."

Peggy: "What do you mean, 'do' it?"

Ellen: " Quilt it. What do you mean, 'What do you mean' (laughs)? What do you *think* I'm doing?"

Faye: "Don't you know what this means?" (Gestures like Ellen did, grinning.)

Peggy: "Well, I, I…I do now. (Laughs)"

Gail: (Jokingly) "It's sign language – universal sign language - I'm *sure* it's written in a book somewhere." (G2/1B/238-245)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Peggy: "You [quilters] all have different strengths and you sort of play off each other."

Faye: "We'll even go into stores, and we'll say, 'Oh, Gail's got to come and see that. It's her type of fabric. Or that's Sharon's fabric or that's [someone else's] fabric. We just all know. It doesn't work a hundred percent of the time, but generally. We all have such different tastes in colours. It's amazing."

Peggy: "But when you all come together as a group, it really works!"

Faye: "Yeah! And it's a very eclectic group."

Peggy: “And you wouldn’t have ever come together if it wasn’t for quilting.”

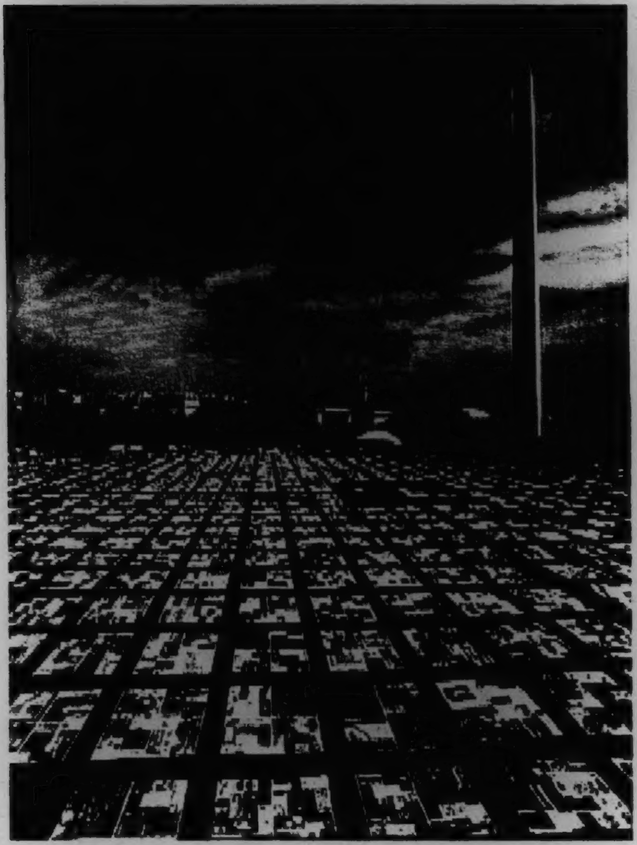
---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

At a post-research briefing, the group asked many questions pertaining to privacy and publicity. On their request, changes were made to wording and format. I had pushed the group’s boundaries, and they had had time over the summer to discuss their concerns without me present.

While quilting brought us together, it did not guarantee social acceptance. At the end of the meeting, the bee discussed an upcoming project. It was clear to me through conversation and lack of eye contact that I was not going to be included in this project. I was no longer considered a member. The research was over and the group’s boundaries closed. Another member and I were leaving the city; changes had occurred and all of us had new opportunities ahead.

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Figure 81. **The NAMES Project *AIDS Memorial Quilt***



(www.aidsquilt.org, retrieved October 5, 2001)

> ...each of us can do something. Walking three miles to work won't heal the whole ozone layer, but it is something one person can do. And although we each can't do everything, together we can make a difference. Each of these bignesses is made up of many small parts. Individual people, sometimes working in groups. Individual moments. It is like the AIDS quilt, stitched together by the NAMES Project. Each patch is small, personal, and handmade. Each one reflects the person who made it and his or her friend, lover, or child who died of AIDS. Each patch is different, sweet, sophisticated, loving, stylish, outrageous. Together they make an immense blanket of love, care, sadness, and beauty. Like the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. which lists the names of all the Americans who died in that confusing war, it is difficult to see the quilt without feeling simultaneously the poignancy of each individual patch and the power of the entire statement.
>
> Ram Dass and Mirabai Bush (In Brussat & Brussat, 1998, p. 342)

Outer Border

The image of the *AIDS Memorial Quilt* (Figure 81) creates the outermost border of the virtual research quilt. It represents the quilting environment extending beyond the bee group. Theoretically, it corresponds to the largest ring in the human ecology model and puts the quilters and the bee within a larger context. But unlike a two-dimensional diagram, the boundaries of this system are like diaphanous fabric: permeable, fluid and often invisible.

The bee works in partnership with the broader quilt community, in particular the Edmonton District Quilters Guild. Other associations like the Canadian Quilters Association, Alberta Craft Council and the Fibre-arts Network also offer myriad resources, such as workshops, show and tell sessions and opportunities for charitable work. The organizations have elected officials and formal meetings. They provide leadership and solidarity for their membership.

An active part of the network involves the retail stores that supply fabrics and classes. Sewing materials are often purchased as travel souvenirs, and quilters sometimes take trips for the sole purpose of visiting fabric shops.

The bee group acts as a filter for the information available from the general quilt community and becomes a sounding board for possibilities, allowing members to discuss opportunities, risks and benefits. When a decision has been made to commit to a particular project, the group as a whole ensures that it gets done. The group provides a staging ground for activities. Ellen explained that they all have family responsibilities that take priority, so flexibility is important.

One does not have to look far to find quilts that make social statements. Canadian Susan Andrews Grace collaborated with Judy Fretz and members of the group, Ploughshares, to create the *UN Peace Quilt* (Hunt, 1996). Judith Vierow's *Far and Away* (In Norton, 2000) memorializes the people killed and injured in the 1995 bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. Pat White from the Yukon explains her reasons for quilting,

> Isis is part of an ongoing series in which I am exploring human individuality in the context of broader society. In particular, I am

> looking at our compulsion to unthinkingly follow the mainstream regardless of how our souls speak to us. This quilt is about the commercialization of spirituality and how we, as women, fear our own inherent wisdom and power. I am exploring ways to take responsibility for making the necessary connections which enable me to become a powerful, active participant in my own life, rather than passing this responsibility to some external source.
> (In Hunt 1996, p. 200)

Many quilters explore issues of personal and social well-being. They connect fabric images with words to make political statements. As symbols of comfort and security, quilts seem to provide a natural juxtaposition for issues that detract from individual and social well-being. Displaying them creates awareness and affects public perception and understanding.

The image I chose to represent the broad community is the *AIDS Memorial Quilt.* It symbolizes the powerful influence that this artform can have at an international level. Quilt culture provides a means by which millions of women, and other people, can publicly voice their concerns and ideas.

According to human ecological theory, all levels of quilt culture are interrelated. One individual, one issue, one group can create a ripple effect throughout the community and beyond.

The quilt that has arguably had the most impact is the *AIDS Memorial Quilt,* which is why it was chosen to represent quilting in the global community. In 1985, Cleve Jones noticed a wall on which were pasted the names of people who died from AIDS. This image provided him with the inspiration to sew the first block in memory of his friend, Marvin Feldman. Since then, over forty-four thousand panels have been created in thirty-six countries. About fourteen million visitors have seen the panels, which are the largest community arts project in the world (http://www.aidsquilt.org). Quilt historian Robert Shaw writes, "[The AIDS quilt] is unquestionably the most effective grassroots consciousness-raiser in the long and noble history of the American quilt as an instrument of social change (In Norton, 2000, p. 56)."

I was intrigued by the image from the AIDS quilt website. Although there were other images from which to choose, this was the most powerful. Panels on the ground form a fan – wide at the bottom and narrowing at the base of the buildings – drawing the observer into the scene. There is a sense of reaching out; the panels like fingers beckoning. As the eye moves upward, there is a realization that this picture is a tale of unity and collaboration because of the breadth of the quilt. Just to the right of centre, a single section stands out because of the colour variation, a reminder that the contribution of individuals is at the heart of this quilt. The government buildings represent the quilts' political statement. The sky, under which we all live, symbolizes unity. Punctuating the azure is a monument, a needle poking up from the underside, like an invisible quilter adding stitches to provide strength and security. When set side by side, the *AIDS Memorial Quilt* photograph creates beckoning fans and quilters' needles, suggesting a community of quilters active under a horizon of blue.

In some of our conversations, the quilters talked about how quilting connected them with others. This section seams together stories that move beyond the bee. Although there is little evidence of acute political activism, the examples show how quilting threads peoples' lives together.

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Names

Performed by Cathy Miller

A wonderful song by Cathy Fink about the largest and most tragic quilt of them all. The creator of the quilt is Cleve Jones, whose inspired idea resulted in this breathtaking memorial to so many AIDS victims. There are currently at least 36 countries with AIDS Memorial Quilts.

A patchwork of thousands of precious names
There must be someone that you know
Woven together in a quilted frame
Names that loved ones won't let go

And I know that my name could be there
And I feel the pain and the fear
And as human love and passion do not make us all the same

We grieve for the lovers and the families
And pray they'll meet again some day
But until that time, I will carry the flame
As the numbers grow, we'll not forget their names

A lover, a carpenter, a father, a friend
A sister, a minister, a mom
Each quilted piece holds a memory
Each memory helps us to go on.

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"The other thing great about quilting, is that 99.9% of the people are nice, you know, they're friendly.

"We were in Whitefish [Montana] last year…and I was looking around down there. And I heard some lady talk with the two clerks at the front…something about how much is it going to cost to send something to Edmonton. 'Cause this lady's on the phone and she wants so much more fabric or something.

"And I'm listening to this and trying to figure out how much it's going to cost and how much duty and all this stuff is going to cost her. And I went up there and said, 'Excuse me, like I just overheard you, but would you mind if I asked who it is you're sending it to, 'cause that's where I'm from and I *might* even know the person'.

"I didn't know this person, but it turns out she belongs to the Edmonton Quilt Guild. I said, 'If she wants, I can take it back for her', and these ladies are looking at me, like '*What?*' So I left [the fabric] over at Lori's where she went and picked it up. To this day I don't know what this woman looks like. She left me a little thank you note." (Faye I/1A/347-385)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Faye's comment had two parts. First, an observation that most quilters are nice, which I agree is true. Quilters I have met have been generally very pleasant. I thought about this statement, wondering if nice people are attracted to quilting, or do they learn to be kind within that milieu? I suspect both scenarios are true.

Faye goes on to describe a situation in which she could be of service to some quilters. Not only did she do a favor for the staff at the fabric shop, but she also helped the quilter from Edmonton and received a thank you card in return.

This kind of reciprocity is common; kindness seems to be the moral code of conduct within the quilt community. Quilters often take personal responsibility for care and compassion. If a person is a quilter, and believes that quilters are good people, then that individual might act in accordance with that belief. It seems possible that individuals within the patchwork community have internalized guidelines based on women's characteristics of cooperation, nurturing and care (Goldberger et al., 1996; Belenky et al., 1986; Gilligan, 1982; Taylor, n.d.).

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Once in an airport lounge, I noticed a woman with a quilt-in-process on her lap. About my age, she was organizing her things; settling in to do some hand sewing. Quilters I met on other occasions were interesting, kind and trustworthy so, assuming this woman would be similar, I introduced myself.

We chatted for a few minutes, but I could tell by her body language that she was uncomfortable. I wasn't sure what to say, so I let her talk. Soon she revealed the source of her agitation: she was going back home to tell her husband that she was leaving him. Her close friends might have known, but I was a stranger, yet not entirely so. (Peggys' notes, November, 1999)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

When my children were young I told them if they needed help in a public place, to ask a woman with children. I could have also told them the same thing about a quilter. The presence of a quilt, like a business suit, clerical collar or biker's leathers provide clues to an individual's personality. A woman with a quilt is likely to be similar to a woman with children.

I felt comfortable talking to the airport woman and she with me. We both understood the culture of quilting and the nature of the community. I knew she was approachable, and she could confide in me. The quilt provided us with a reason to connect as well as some insight to our personalities.

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"I really enjoy the fabric. And I really enjoy the women that I meet…I've met a few [men] and I enjoy them too, but mostly it's the women. The fellowship…it's almost like a *bridge* between age groups and socio-economic groups. Some women in the guild have university degrees and they're well educated and well spoken, and they make wonderful quilts. And other women in the guild never made it past grade eight you know, and didn't live a very fancy life…and they are terrific women, and make *amazing* quilts. And have a lot to share and are really open about sharing it.

"It's a very supportive kind of community. (Sharon R. I/1A/219-258)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

By setting a mirror perpendicular to a quilt block (or larger section), one sees a symmetrical pattern, an image of what a combination of such blocks will look like. The mirror can be moved, thereby revealing more possibilities for design.

Sometimes, when I meet people, I bring up the topic of quilting – my mirror – to see how I might connect with that person. I move the mirror around by asking about things like family quilts, to get different views of the same subject. I am often surprised by the connections I reveal, especially with men. I used to think, as many others do, that quilts are only of interest to women. But I have found that the topic of patchwork often crosses gender lines.

I was told that when engaging in qualitative research, one should look for data that doesn't fit the norm, because there is something important at that point. The ability of women and men to relate to quilt symbolism is, I believe, one of those points. Quilts touch all people, literally and figuratively. I believe it is their 'feminine' image that undermines the important role quilts play in connecting people.

When I told 'Greg' a professor from whom I was taking a class that quilting was my area of research, his face brightened. He grew up on a farm; quilting was a frequent activity. In the summer Greg's mother would set up a temporary kitchen outside. The structure was used for cooking and preserving, and there was always a quilt project in a frame. He told me about the many hours he and his many siblings used to spend working on the quilt. Initially I was surprised by the intimacy of our conversation, but later understood that the topic of quilting triggers, for many, deeply personal memories. (Peggys' notes, November 2000)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

There are several well-known American male quilters, such as John Flynn, David Hornung, Michael James, Ricky Tims, and Ike Winner. In Canada, the "Men of the Cloth", a group of all male quilters in Collingwood, Ontario boast an international fan club. In an interview with Arthur Black of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) radio's *BasicBlack* during the fall of 2001, bee leader Jim Kinnear (http://www.pianoguy.com/gne/quilt.htm) described how a fundraising challenge – a dare to the spouses of women quilters – initiated the group. At the September 2001Great Northern Exhibition, their raffled quilt raised almost five thousand dollars for the non-profit fair board. Swatches of plaid fabric have come from as far as England for the next fundraiser, a 2001 Odyssey quilt.

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"I decided I would just not take classes for a while, unless there was something that was really *different*…or a really well known teacher because I could learn about *teaching* from a good teacher…

"…A class is an opportunity to get together with other quilters…and others have already solved the problem that you're facing.

"…Quilters are such a *welcoming*, non-threatening group – very supportive. I mean going to a retreat is a lot of fun. Oh, it's just a hoot! You get all these like-minded women together, just sewing to beat the band, 'Finished another one!' and everyone's all excited and clapping…walking around looking at what the next one's doing…it's like 'quilt frenzy'. It's exhausting in a really very fun and pleasant way.

"You always learn from other people. *Always*." (Sharon R. I/1A/171-205)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"Certainly [at retreat] lunches and coffee's you …come together [and] you pull stuff from everybody." (Ellen I/2A/140-152)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Ellen: "Another reason why I still go up [to Hinton] is because I love these kids! (Laughs) I've got an extended group of quilting friends."

Peggy: "I know you do!"

Ellen: "Because I have that interest up there. It was kind of cool actually, when we had the sewing show in February here. I had lunch with all, well not *all* of them, but about five of them from Hinton. And then had coffee with the bee.

Peggy: "At the same show?"

Ellen: "Yeah! …And then I've gone to Lori's [Fabric Cottage], and I know the girls that run [another fabric store]…." (I/1A/190-201)

* * *

For the past several years, Lori's Country Cottage has been the primary site for quilters in Sherwood Park. This hub provides a network of connections to the quilt community locally, nationally and internationally. Lori's sponsors an annual quilt show and has been supportive of the new Sherwood Park Quilters Guild. This fall Lori's moved a third time in less than a decade – again to a more spacious location – indicating the popularity and economic viability of this business. (Figures 82a, 82b, and 82c)

* * *

Peggy: "We talked earlier about the popularity of quilting. I talked to Lori a couple of years ago, and she said that she'd originally started a store with all kinds of fabrics. But it was the quilting cottons that were selling so well. So, that's why she went into quilting. It was a business decision. She isn't a quilter either – she was a sewer."

Faye: "I think to this day, she likes sewing clothes."

Peggy: "I think so. But it's been quilting that's kept her in business." (I/1A/13-19)

* * *

Sharon H.: "I heard about [another quilters] workshop…[at] a really nice facility, they charged fifteen dollars. They had gourmet goodies for lunch [and they demonstrated] Celtic [techniques]."

Gail: "…Being that cheap you never know [what you will get, but] if you only learn one thing, it doesn't matter if you like [the topic]. [You may not] want to do a whole bunch like that…but if you go and you learn one thing [it would be worthwhile]." (G1/1B/186-191)

* * *

Ellen: "[One quilter] said, 'I want to know why you haven't come to UFO [unfinished object] night'. I said, 'I *am* going to go'. And she said, 'No, no, at Lori's [Fabric Cottage]. I said, 'I don't want to pay eight dollars to sew at Lori's when I can sew at home'. She said, 'Yes, but *we're* there. You pay for the *company*!'." (G2/2A/302)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Faye: "I'm just amazed at how many of these women who are coming to [new guild meetings] don't know anybody other than maybe one person they come with, and that's it. You think you've been around the quilting world for a little while and you should know a lot of them. Anybody that quilts sort of knows each other, but…when I was phoning different people I'd ask, 'Do you know of anybody who does this or that', and they said 'No, I don't know anybody in it'." (G1/1A/215-227)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"[As a member of the Western Canadian Fibre Art Network]…you make your own designs; you create your own work. And like artists in other formats…very often the quilters work in series. …If you have an idea or a theme that you want to work on, then you would make a series of quilts on that theme. The theme might be interpreting a colour, or it might be creating a feeling or a mood with, say, a landscape quilt or an abstract quilt. Or communicating a message [for example] if you were very concerned about the environment, or domestic violence. In a way it's almost like a kind of a therapy. You work – emotionally and intellectually – you work through some ideas and issues as you're working on your quilt. …[Fibre artists] are, for the most part, *very* creative people, and a lot of fun. (Sharon R. I/1B/35-53)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

> Imaginative play is the source of creativity. Whenever we express our deepest self, we become co-creators in the ongoing refinement of

> the universe. …[Play] enables us to express ourselves creatively, to use our intuition and imagination, to savor pleasure and the lightness of being, and to make our humble contribution to the unfinished masterpiece of the world. (Brussat & Brussat, 1998, pp. 350-351)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---

"People go to such *enormous* lengths…the effort, the time, the love that goes into these garments that they make and in some cases, quilts…it's just overwhelming. Unbelievable." (Sharon R. I/1A/219-266)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---

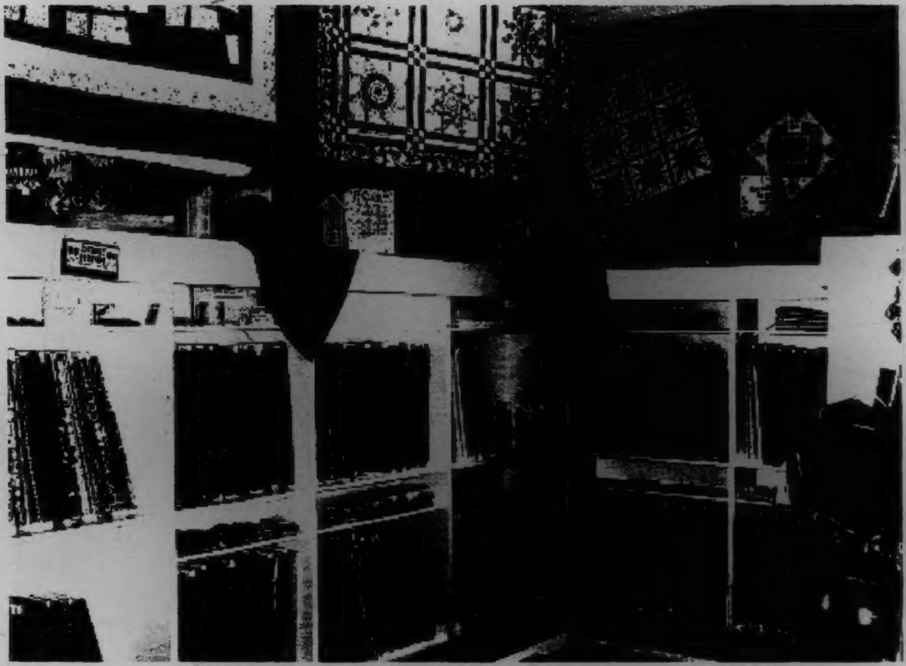


Figure 82a. Lori's Country Cottage 1

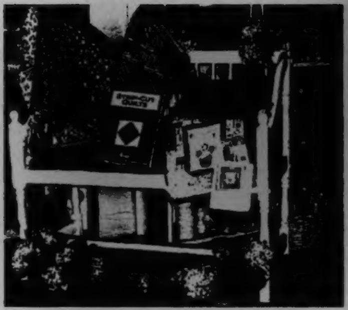


Figure 82b.
Lori's Country Cottage 2

Figure 82c. Lori's Country Cottage 3

Assembling the Virtual Quilt

Prior to final assembly I stacked the completed quilt top, batt, and back together to create a virtual quilt sandwich. (Figure 9) The top is the composition of quilt images, the batt is the text, and the back is human ecology theory. When sandwiched together, they were scrutinized for fit and accuracy. In other words, I re-searched the virtual quilt components to ensure that image, text, and theory, are accurate and relate to each other.

The Virtual Sandwich

The virtual quilt top consists of six blocks and two borders. (Figure 6) Digital photographs of each participant's quilts form the six blocks. Arranged two across and three down, they establish the centre of the top. Encircling the blocks, nested one inside the other, are two borders also created from digital images. The innermost border, an enlarged detail of the bee's quilt *The Gift of the Magi* (Figure 80), represents the group of quilters. The outermost border, a repetition of the *AIDS Memorial Quilt* (Figure 81) image, is the global quilt community.

The virtual batt consists of text from various sources, but mostly from the voices of quilters themselves. In an actual quilt, batting is not pieced; it is a seamless length of material. For this study it was clearer and more functional to pair each participant's text-ile batt with her virtual block. If one were to remove all digital images of the virtual top, the words that remained would be the batting.

The back of the virtual quilt is human ecology theory. As the foundation for the study it provided a basis from which all quilt components were designed. The philosophy takes into account the dynamic interrelationships between holistic human experience and the multifaceted nature of quilting. On the surface the model appears simple – nested circles, interrelated ideas – but attempts to use it as a research tool were frustrating. The sweeping philosophy resisted attempts to design simple yet comprehensive research.

I could not explain my determination to use human ecology theory, but an inner voice insisted I should make it work. Later I realized that the philosophy of human ecology is a fundamental part of my understanding of the world. With a nod to Plato, I think human ecology therefore I am human ecology. Meeting the theoretical challenge was a way to bring my authentic presence to the research, and helped make the implicit explicit. In doing so, I created a model to follow and clarified my position for the benefit of others and myself.

Quilting

Quilting is the stitched design of thread that pierces all three layers of a quilt sandwich. Although decorative, quilting is important because it provides strength and durability. The analysis stitched throughout the layers of this study is the quilting. The quilting/analysis punctuates the virtual quilt at critical points and traces the evolution of the research. Quilt stitching is not visible on the virtual top because it interfered with the design. Stitching is implied by the patchwork configuration of blocks with sashing, inner and outer borders because this design relates to human ecology theory. As the study evolved I made connections between layers using words as threads, which became the quilting/analysis.

Quilt stitching can be geometric, connecting points at regular intervals, or it can "meander" around depending on the sensibility of the sewer. Both techniques were used in this research quilt. The rectilinear quilting/analysis defines each of the component parts – blocks, sashings, inner border, and outer border – while at the same time connecting them. As illustrated in Figure 3, these evolved directly from human ecology theory. Although sensitive to the participants and material, I delineated what and where the geometric lines of quilting would be so they corresponded to the nested circles research design.

In contrast, the meandering analysis emerged from the stash of materials, and evolved with the virtual quilt. Threads of analysis that consist of women's voices and other sources of text, wind around linking stories to images, music to theory, literature to patchwork, and each idea to one or more others. Some of the analysis came from the participants themselves, as they spoke about their quilting experience.

I created the quilt/analysis stitching using two threads: human ecology theory and voices from quilters, literature and other sources. All three components – the virtual top, batt, and back – are designed based on the nested circle theory and philosophy of human ecology theory, and executed using image and language. On the top and the back, stitches are implied rather than visual. The analysis found throughout the thesis secures the virtual research quilt together.

Binding

Sharon R: "[Quilting has taught me to] savor every step, even under pressure. That's why I like to put the binding on by hand. I have never sewn binding on by machine. …I like to sit with it and work with a needle in my hand. I like to finish it that way…."

Peggy: "I also like the warmth and the energy…the warmth of it on my lap. I really enjoy that. I'm all snuggled up underneath the quilt, you know. I'm actually kind of using it – it's an exchange of energy to me, you know. Where it's becoming more vibrant and more alive and I'm actually just putting my handwork into it at the end."

Sharon R: "I never thought about enjoying the heat of it, but I enjoy that too, because I usually do it…quietly…I don't stitch when I'm watching TV. (I/1B/405-425)"

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

Binding is the narrow strip of fabric that is sewn around a quilt. It smoothes the raw edges and deters fraying. The strip can be made of one fabric or many, depending on the desired aesthetic effect. The binding can make a bold statement, or subtly blend with the piecework to enhance the overall quilt pattern. Binding must be carefully applied. If it is too loose, wrinkles will form that will wear thin, and if it is too tight the stitches will pull apart.

The process of applying this finish is also called binding, and it signals the quilts' completion. Generally the first stitches are done with a sewing machine to give the piece strength. The last step usually involves hand sewing an almost invisible seam.

Binding provides an opportunity for closer inspection because it must be done slowly. The quilt will rotate and twist during sewing, providing opportunities to see unique perspectives as designs and colours overlap and change shape. Seeing the patchwork from kaleidoscopic perspectives changes ones thoughts about the quilt and stimulates ideas for subsequent projects.

When the binding is done I often stand up and shake out the quilt, watching the colours ripple. Settling it down smoothly, I will step back and look at the quilt as though for the first time – it is no longer an idea, it is a tangible object. During the planning phase I try to imagine what it might look like, but the finished quilt is always a surprise. I inevitably change the design and colour as I create because the patchwork looks very different in reality, and new possibilities present themselves. There are always unintentional secondary designs that are usually a pleasant surprise. I marvel at all the tiny pieces unified into a whole quilt, congratulating myself on some aspects and planning changes for the next.

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

> But Bel-Gazou is silent when she sews, silent for hours on end, with her mouth firmly closed…She is silent, and she – why not write down the word that frightens me – she is thinking.
>
> (Colette in Parker, 1989, pp. 9-10)

---^---^---^---^---^---^---^---

As I bound this virtual quilt, I recognized that the process of creating it educed new understandings about women who quilt and why they do so. One important idea is that we must allow ourselves to play. Artist and scholar Stephen Nachmanovitch explains,

> This whole enterprise of improvisation in life and art, of recovering free play and awakening creativity, is about allowing ourselves to be true to ourselves and our visions, and true to the undiscovered wholeness that lies beyond the self and the vision we have today…. Education must teach, reach, and celebrate the whole person rather than merely transfer knowledge.
>
> (Nachmanovitch 1990, p. 177)

Quilting is a process of learning and the quilter is at the centre of the exploration. Through this study, some of the lessons I learned were about me. Although some are sub-conscious and others not relevant to this discussion, one in particular stood out. I struggled at the beginning with how I ought to start. As I played with ideas I became conscious of how critical the philosophy of human ecology is to my understanding of the world. I could not separate myself nor my work from the assumptions put forth by human ecology theory, so it formed the basis of this research. This revelation was important because, like the other participants, I developed a heightened self-awareness through play.

One significant aspect of quilting was the almost palpable enthusiasm and joy with which the activity is pursued. Mihaly Csikszentmihaly (1991) might call quilting a "flow" experience because of the sense of personal growth and satisfaction it provides. Enhanced well-being is a recurring theme found throughout the layers of quilt culture.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being. Psychologists J. Melvin Witmer and Thomas J. Sweeney (1992) developed a holistic model for wellness and prevention based on the WHO concept, and presented several characteristics of a healthy person:

> …spiritual values; sense of worth, sense of control; realistic beliefs; spontaneous and emotional responsiveness; intellectual stimulation, problem solving and creativity; sense of humor; physical fitness and nutrition; success in the work task; satisfying friendships and a social network; and satisfaction in marriage or other intimate relationships (p. 146).

Witmer and Sweeney's words harmonized with the holistic, humanistic aspects of this research. Overall caring, supportive individuals concerned with improving their environment through improved self-knowledge, social connectedness, and aesthetics characterize quilting.

Quilting provides an opportunity for introspection; a contemplative spiritual experience. The quilt is a pivotal object around which thoughts, memories and plans revolve. The quilter is free to explore emotions, inspiration and possibilities. As the patchwork develops and changes, so does the quilter. All these experiences become embedded in the quilt. Both the process and the object can be intensely personal and embedded with layers of meaning, which has potential to grow as time passes.

Australian Annabelle Solomon (1997) explored feminist spirituality through the creation of a series of art-quilts.

> In this project I have sought new ways to find expression for myself and a growing appreciation of myself and others as creative and spiritual expressions of the universe, in an interaction of being empowered and being empowering. ...when deep perception of spiritual and creative energies as sourced in ourselves becomes part of daily awareness, it is possible for new understandings about relationship to emerge (Solomon, A., Unpublished masters thesis, University of New South Wales, p. 58).

When Solomon shared her quilts, writing and conversation with others she was able to recognize and celebrate her spirituality.

Quilting demands considerable time, introspection and decision making, which helps one recognize and clarify issues of self-identity that enhances self-esteem. Each quilt is a "snapshot" and over time a quilter creates a series that provides evidence of personal changes. As each snapshot is shared with others, it mirrors what others see in the quilt and quilter. This feedback, within the typically supportive environment of quilters makes us think, question, and re-consider what we have done. Quilting helps to understand who we are. As self-knowledge and identity changes over time, self-esteem can continue to build through the quilting process. The social component regards the supportive environment created and maintained by the quilt community. They have learned how to create unity and even beauty out of diverse elements, and do so with people as well as fabrics.

The atmosphere of wellness that is created by the quilt community consists of social connection, imagery, creativity, laughter, play and positive energy. All these elements have been shown to enhance health and healing associated with the strong mind and body connection (Chopra, 2000/1991; Pert, 1999; Schulz, 1998; Northrup, 1998/1994; Estes, 1997; Hafen et al, 1996; Segal, 1990; Borysenko, 1988). Lynn Basa asserts, "Every culture has a textile tradition, and in most cultures it's connected with healing rituals, and in most cultures women do it" (*I*n Smith, 1996, p 52). Many needlework terms are synonymous with healing such as stitching, mending, patching, tacking, knitting, binding and sewing.

Most people enjoy quilts in some way, and many are profoundly touched by their meaning. A result of generations of popularity, quilt projects vary widely and are limited only by the imagination. By setting one's own pace and direction, quilters can have a large measure of autonomy. As personal goals are met and competence builds, ones sense of personal empowerment grows.

An important aspect of quilting is the concept of "challenges" – pushing ones self and others to try something new – to push the boundaries of what one considers "reality". The sashing of the virtual quilt blocks represent how reality changed for each quilter because of a new experience or perspective. Challenging personal and socially held beliefs about reality can begin a transformative process. One cannot undo knowledge; the world has taken on new meaning. For quilters, personal and social changes are often made to improve wellbeing, and quiltmaking becomes a process for exploring, understanding and seeking solutions for problems in "reality".

Quilting enhances emotional responsiveness through reflection, playfulness, and social connection. Physical and mental wellbeing is improved in a positive, caring and relaxing environment. In an article entitled *The Healing Power of Humor* psychotherapist Maud Purcell (http://www.drkoop.com, retrieved November 19, 2001) says that laughter reduces pain, strengthens immune function and decreases stress. It also has positive emotional and intellectual impact.

The ability to solve problems and be creative – such as opportunities provided by quilting – enhances the quality of life. Witmer and Sweeney (1992) write that sound thinking includes,

> …the need to know, the need to learn, the need to organize, curiosity, and a sense of wonder. Explorativeness, experimental-mindedness, flexibility, open-mindedness, imagination, and creativity are additional intellectual conditions and characteristics that enable the person to master the environment and pursue mental, artistic and productive activities that challenge thinking and produce satisfaction (p. 143).

Quilters approached problems as if they were design issues. They seemed to imagine the world as a giant patchwork project for which they sought solutions. These challenges were both personal (arthritis, carpal tunnel syndrome) and social (fundraising for breast cancer).

The women in this study were in mid-life. This transitional stage involves changes to physicality, family circumstances, employment status, many of which are unexpected. At this stage many women can expect an unprecedented thirty or more years of good health and activity. Quilting is an empowering exploratory process that provides time to reflect and re-fabricate oneself in preparation for and response to life changes.

Edmonton artist Mary Sullivan Holdgrafer is an example of how quilting improved one woman's well-being. Well educated, career oriented, and a self-professed perfectionist, Holdgrafer became ill with breast cancer in mid-life. Her reality was turned upside down and to cope she immersed herself in quilting. The quilts Holdgrafer created as a result of her cancer experience formed the first exhibit of her work, called *Healing Journey* (University of Alberta, Department of Human Ecology, 1999). Recently she exhibited *Postcards from the Playground* with Martha Cole (Agnes Bugera Gallery, May 15 to 28, 2002). Quilting helped Holdgrafer find and listen to her voice through a process she calls "mindfulness", or purposeful reflection with the intention to learn. Holdgrafer's search for meaning allowed her to examine her lifestyle and explore options she would not have discovered had it not been for quilting.

The virtual quilt process was similar to actual quilt making in many ways. For the research I used the essential activities, experiences and thoughts that I use while quilting; the exploration was creative and new, yet familiar at the same time. I realized at the beginning that knowing who I was and how I fit into this research patchwork was critical to the design and implementation of the study. Throughout the project, I reflected on why I might make one decision over another; personal knowing and re-fabricating is intricately woven throughout this research. The quilt making process did not allow anything less than complete immersion.

Show and Tell

> What we are looking for on earth and in earth and in ourselves is the process that can unlock for us the mystery of meaningfulness in our daily lives. We can only see half of anything. The other half is the meaning we give to what we see...In every tree, apple, flower, there is an aha! waiting!
>
> Alice O. Howell
> (In Brussat & Brussat, 1996, p.296)

Show and tell sessions are held at almost all quilt guild meetings, workshops and conferences, and provide opportunities to discuss newly completed projects. An overview might include technical information, experiences making the piece, why it was made, the inspiration, challenges faced and what was learned, and the meaning of the quilt. The tone is conversational not scripted. This show and tell, like others, will not detail everything but it will create a space where I can share my story.

I began this study wondering why quilting was so popular. Why did it attract people of all ages, genders, and nationalities? Intuitively I believed quilting was a way of learning. Quilt metaphors are sometimes used to help others understand a complex idea. "It's like gathering little bits and pieces from everywhere and fitting them together in just the right way to create something meaningful", I explained to friends who wanted to know about my research. I wanted to understand how quilting, an ordinary everyday activity, touched the hearts of so many people. Rather than expressing my query in a way that might rule out possibilities I asked, "Why quilt?" This was a simple question with no simple answers.

One of the biggest challenges was to find an appropriate methodology. Some had potential, but none were totally useful. I rejected many because they were not woman-centered. It was important to approach the topic in a way that was underpinned with female tradition and understanding. I realized I was not going to find a methodological template to fit this project. As possibilities unraveled, one thread endured: quilting itself was a form of inquiry.

I decided to use a quilting approach, whatever that was. Could I apply my hunch that quilting is epistemological? It was risky, but it was honest. I wanted to create research that was authentically quilt-like: it had to germinate from my soul and grow with the help of other quilters. Unlike traditional research, the design would be an original. Most importantly, it would be quilt-woman-centered. I wanted readers to resonate with my "quilting-as-research while re-searching quilting" journey.

It is entirely possible to sew for days only to discover that the intended effect will not work; the quilt is ruined. Having experienced this I knew that a research quilt might share the same fate. But quilters make lots of mistakes that end up being serendipitous successes. Even so, lessons learned from a disappointing experience are not failures; my attempt would open dialogue about possibilities. However, my sense was that if the study evolved like a quilt it would be successful. It sounds simple in retrospect, but deciding on this direction took a very long time. Implementing my plan, because it evolved and changed shape depending on what I discovered, took even longer.

I approached the research with little more than shaky trust in my knowledge of quilting. Weeks into the project I felt I had less information than I started with. I also had to wrestle with traditional assumptions about what research was. To move past this, I imagined I was going to make an actual quilt from fabric. How to start? There were a few possibilities. Certain fabrics or colours might inspire me, or a design idea, or a technique, or a thought about someone or something, a place perhaps. In this case I had a theme: to use human ecology theory to study why a specific group of women quilt. The two key points to which I returned many, many times, were human ecology and women quilters.

Choosing these was like deciding my quilt would be made from two colours. Although I reduced the variables the task was still complicated because of the availability of shades, tones, intensity, and values. The project reminded me of my quilt *Pansies* (Figure 21), in which I used only purple and green. Swirls of violet, mauve, lavender, periwinkle, lime, aqua, apple, and forest, their placement and relationship to each other, make *Pansies* successful.

I had already collected reams of literature and other materials for the research. Thinking like a quilter, I called this my stash. For an actual quilt a stash would consist of fabrics, threads, and possibly other embellishments such as lace or buttons. For the research quilt I ultimately collected visual documentation such as digital photos of participant's quilts and three consecutive video-taped sessions of weekly quilt-bee group meetings. (See appendix A.) I also audio-taped interviews of five quilters, conversed with quilters by telephone, e-mail, and in person. I discovered quilt music by Cathy Miller (2000). In addition I accumulated relevant articles from books, magazines and newspapers as well as academic literature. The variety was necessary to begin to replicate the visual and storied nature of quilting. Using this stash I could begin the analysis phase of my research.

The collection was extensive and I was overwhelmed but intrigued. There were ideas for several research quilts. The challenge was to create only one that best explored the research question, "Why quilt?" I experimented with several possibilities, each a form of analysis:

- drawings on paper,
- arrangements of fabrics each representing an idea,
- coloured construction paper notes taped on a wall in patchwork style,
- transcribed interviews and conversations highlighted in colours to identify themes,
- highlighted transcriptions cut with scissors and rearranged,
- hand-written notes and diagrams on loose-leaf,
- multi-hued sticky notes pasted on a large piece of cardboard,
- digital quilt images displayed on a computer screen.

I struggled with the overwhelming amount of information but nothing meaningful emerged like I expected after my qualitative research course. (Perhaps this was the price for being original and not using a methodological template with its matching methodological software.)

Again I focused on the salient points: the quilters and human ecology theory. I grouped transcribed interviews and bee group sessions into concentric rings. "I" statements, in which the quilter referred to herself were at the centre, followed by references to family members, then friends, and finally others. Grouping participant's words this way helped me visualize the material so that it could be analyzed and compared to other stories. The stash, the women's voices at least, were beginning to fit the theoretical model.

This process required a lot of cutting and pasting of paper which were poor substitutes for fabric. It was essential to see pieces and move them around so I could imagine more combinations. I also drew many colourful diagrams and flow charts, and made sketches. This was part of the design wall concept (Figure 2) that allowed me to follow themes and helped me recognize when I had ventured too far. It also helped me decide where a story or image ought to go relative to the overall research pattern.

When I got stuck analyzing the text, I thought about the quilts as objects (in this case images of objects). One afternoon as I doodled, nested circles morphed into quilt-like shapes consisting of six inner blocks with two borders. (Figure 3) From the theoretical model I created a quilt-top design that I might use to organize the written material.

I was unsure if the human ecology-quilt model could be applied to both image and text. Before I acted on my discovery, I read each woman's stories and poured over her quilts. By doing so, I learned more about each participant and their relationships than I had with just the words, or just the quilts. One woman in particular did not have much to say during the interview, but spoke volumes with her quilts. I began thinking about why this was the case, but did not investigate because it was beyond the scope of the study. What was important was the insight that I acquired using both quilts and stories. I had based my early exploration on language, but the visual symbolism of quilts provided the breakthrough.

Conceptualizing the components of this study as a human ecological quilt proved to be useful and flexible. The integrity of the quilting-as-knowing concept remained connected to human ecology theory, the participants, the topic, and me as researcher throughout the research. Generations of women must have used quilting as a way of knowing, but it was not recognized because most attention was given to the male-dominated traditions of science, logic and classical art.

For various reasons computers were used to create and manipulate the participants quilt images, but I had considered using actual fabric. Perhaps going "virtual" was not the most authentic choice, but it was the best choice in this situation. All other aspects of the research were as true to the patchwork process as possible. A virtual quilt allowed me to study quilting without the technical and financial demands of working with fabric. The computer allowed more freedom and flexibility because I saw instant results and could make temporary changes as often as I needed. It was an important part of my design wall process. As well, the final document was more easily stored, duplicated and presented than a quilt.

Once the six blocks (one for each quilter) were roughly designed, I began to create an inner border and an outer border. The borders provided appropriate visual and text-ual space so quilting could be understood in a human ecological framework. Blocks and borders began with quilter's words, developing symbiotically, and taking shape over time. The process was not linear, but recursive, almost organic. The process of creating the virtual quilt evolved slowly because each new understanding lead to new ideas, each of which had to be auditioned to determine which was the best.

One theoretical concept that was not very clear in the early stages of creating the virtual quilt was the interrelationships between parts. (Figure 1) I wondered how to visually represent the connections that were evident in the women's stories and conversations. I discovered how when I re-read Gail's story about her first quilt. She had blocks from her mother-in-law and did not know how to connect them. Her mother told her to add sashing, or strips of fabric. Problem solved. Sashing, in the form of an important story and related image would connect all the blocks and represent the interrelationships between the quilter and the world.

One patchwork technique called "quilt-as-you-go", involves stitching (or quilting) through all three layers (top, batt and backing) as each block or section is completed. For the virtual quilt some of the analysis developed much the same way. The research process involved creating combinations of ideas, then evaluating and re-working them to get just the right fit and feel. I transcribed, edited, auditioned, selected, and moved pieces around just as if it were a fabric quilt. I would wonder, "What does this idea look like over here, in this context?" Most decisions were made intuitively, but each part had to relate to the research design in some way. When I was satisfied with a section, I secured it with analysis. Sometimes I would have to change things around or add something; quilting stitches can be added even after the quilt is technically finished. The on-going, recursive analysis was represented by scrolling quilt stitches that meander in and around ideas, piercing through all layers, connecting and intersecting concepts that suggest the organic, multi-layered experiences of quilters.

Song lyrics, poetry, and prose, and their position in the virtual quilt also form part of the analysis. Many voices create multiple textures that invite the reader to explore and interact with it in his or her own way and in effect, add their own texture. Interacting with the virtual quilt is typical because patchwork is often shared and even touched.

At this point I had a virtual quilt top created from digital images, a layer of text that I called batt because it provided depth and body, and a backing that was conceptualized as human ecology theory which provided the research foundation. Quilt-as-you-go traced my on-going analysis, but the process was still not complete. I imagined stacking the layers – back, batt, and top – and pinning them together making edges even. More imaginary quilting added to the seams connects the design elements; "stitching-in-the-ditch" around the blocks, sashing, and borders secures the quilter's images, voices, and human ecology theory.

Now to attach the binding which is the strip of fabric that finishes the raw perimeter of the quilt sandwich. This is discussed in detail in an earlier section, but in short it is an opportunity to reflect back on the quilt. Turning the patchwork as the binding is slowly sewn on by hand provides new perspectives and generates new ideas.

Quilting is about people: individuals, groups and community. The holistic nature of quilting touches virtually every aspect of the lives of quilters, and the quilters in turn put every aspect of themselves into their art. As findings emerged, they did not stand independently, but were interrelated one with another. It was impossible to cut out a theme, or to isolate it without weakening the integrity of the piece as a whole.

Creating a virtual quilt allowed me to explore intuitive and emotive meanings in addition to the intellectual. It grew from a desire to listen to other quilters, and in the process I listened to myself. My own voice provided authenticity that

Nachmanovitch (1990) calls “acting out of your own center. (p. 179)” He also says that the more natural one is, the more universal the message.

This study provides no specific answers, but rather creates space for dialogue. An example of this came at the presentation of my research at the International Institute of Qualitative Methodology (IIQM) International Conference on Health and Wellness in Banff, in April 2002. After viewing the poster, one professor of nursing from the United Kingdom told me about the dream she had as she awakened from anesthetic after her hysterectomy. Expressing surprise because she was not a quilter but a knitter, she dreamed in vivid detail about a flowered quilt design. She explained that she now understood that they represented her missing ovaries and uterus. I asked if she left it at that, or did she actually sew the quilt. She replied that she had, in fact, created it, and it now hangs above her bed. I was impressed, but not surprised, that it is displayed in such a personal, private, sensual place. It represents her new identity – changed but still whole and possibly even more beautiful for having gained wisdom of understanding through experience.

Even in its virtual form, quilting evoked in this woman, a deeply personal experience that moved beyond the intellectual, to a sensitive place where she lives her daily life. Quilt-researchers Faith Agostinone-Wilson and Nadine Hawke believe, “There is much potential in the use of arts-based inquiries to reach a large audience of people who would otherwise be turned off by the difficult language and inherent classism that permeates traditional forms of research (Agostinone-Wilson & Hawke, 2001, p. 161).” The professor shared her story with me because this study touched both the woman and the academic. The virtual quilt was an invitation to involve this woman’s whole being in a scholarly discussion.

Quilts are deceptively simple but the messages are often powerful and transformative. Unique perspectives force us to see and think in new ways. I have heard (and exclaimed) many times, “I never would have thought of putting that colour (or detail, or idea) there, but it works”. Patchwork offers unexpected joy that enhances the quality of life and sense of well being. Sometimes, it elicits anger and other dark feelings. Quilting puts us in touch with our emotions, and reacquaints us with the human experience that is often lacking in our technological world.

Quilting is a way of knowing. Participants reflected on their thoughts and feelings; they listened and responded to their intuition. Connecting emotion and logic quilters explored and expressed ideas. They learned to reach out and touch, give and receive, to trust and challenge. The process encouraged quilters to stretch the imagination through play, to care, and to create a better world.

The environment created by quilters is conducive to personal growth. This is due in part because they are based on care, support, encouragement and respect, but challenge and risk-taking are also important elements. The community also recognizes and celebrates individual differences and is open to serendipity.

Quilting is about connectedness, linking the conscious to the unconscious, the affective to the intellectual, the self to others, the aesthetic to the technical, the people to the objects, and the past to the present and future. As manifestations of connection, quilts unify dissonant textures, colours, shapes and ideas. Quilts represent the patchwork of fragments between spirit and universe. If we choose to go, quilting is a journey that can take us anywhere and everywhere.

Quilts document women's individual and collective journeys. The process of manipulating image and language helps to explore values and beliefs at emotional and intuitive levels which are deeper than just words and logic alone. As quilters expand their creative efforts they become more self-aware, which promotes personal growth. This seems particularly important for quilters in mid-life who are experiencing personal, familial, and social change.

Quilting encourages new friendships within the patchwork network. Existing relationships can be enhanced through exchange of new ideas and actual quilts. Quilting helps develop social awareness, consciousness, and transformation. The quilt community is primarily positive which seems to have a ripple effect on non-quilters. At a very broad level, quilters seem to conceptualize their own reality as a "quilt", and therefore can perceive other "quilts" from a more neutral, less judgmental, position.

When life is understood as a quilt, as it seems to be with quilters, there is a more open-minded approach to knowing. There is no universal agreement, but quilters seem inclined to hold their judgments in abeyance until they have more information about the whole picture. Willingness to understand context before taking action is an important skill that is further developed by quilting.

I have related my virtual quilting journey, but I have missed so much in the telling. Much of the story is ancient and has come to me through my maternal ancestors. Archetypal female knowing ruffled my thoughts, but can not be put into words. Indeed, language is a poor substitute for quilting because one cannot convey all there is to experience. Knowing is not always quantifiable. As a quilter I can assert that all that we know can never be shared verbally. You will just have to look at quilts, and imagine.

Patchwork of Life

Cathy Miller

Just as artists see the world in colours, light and shadow, quilters tend to see with shapes and seam lines. This is especially easy to understand when flying over the Canadian prairies, where all the land has been subdivided into blocks, and each farmer has his own way of dividing the land.

Sometimes I imagine I'm flying above
This field and this house and this life of mine
I can see the next farm and the fields are like ours
And stone fences mark the seam line.

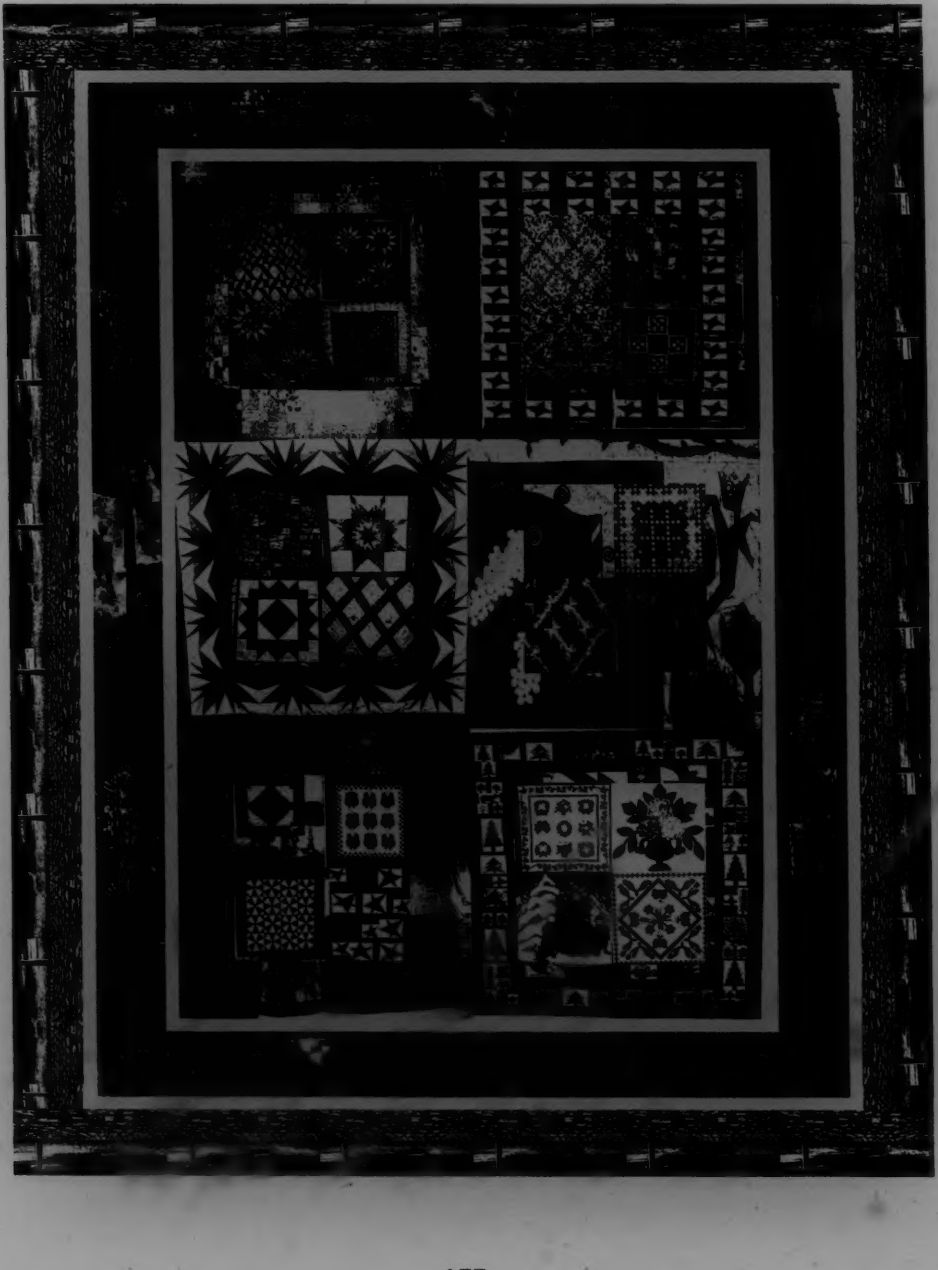
And I fly higher until I can see
The town and the streets and the window frames
And in every one of those picket fence houses
Are people like me, with dreams and with names.

> And the higher I go the more I can see
> From the heavens right back to the start
> Each city and town is a patchwork of life
> And the seams never will pull apart
> No, the seams never will pull apart.

There's a blue border 'round every continent
There are stories of courage and a salty crew
And we're joined by the patches, we're joined by the song
Of god's stitches, so small and so straight and so true.
CHORUS

When I think of my own work, it's painfully slow
As I struggle with patches and bits of thread
But each tear and desire, every hope of us all
Adds a piece to the quilt, when the world is our bed.

Figure 83. ***Fabricating Meaning***
Peggy Boss Mann 2001



Snipped Threads: Thoughts about Future Research

Clean up was an opportunity to reflect on future projects. Scraps of ideas and snipped threads of themes littered my workspace; omitted remnants that did not fit with the project in process. A few of the snippets – questions and notions – are presented below, inviting discussion about the possibilities for new research quilts.

Humans learn by connecting image and language; little is known about the role of quilting as knowing.

Variations of the virtual quilt methodology may provide fresh research. The holistic, emic approach provides insights that emerge from the world view of the participants.

- Quilting lends itself to collaborative work that results in rich dialogue and seems particularly suitable for women. How can a quilt-like approach be used to enhance group discussions and projects?

Some of the snippets were topics that went beyond the subject of quilting. There was evidence that quilting was used to negotiate the politics of space in the home and spousal relationships. These micro-struggles appeared to parallel women's fight for gender equality at a broader cultural level.

- The number and placement of quilts in private (home) and public (galleries) spaces suggest the power of the quilter. What are the relationships at the juncture of quilt and space? Is the politics of quilting parallel to other aspects of life? If so, how can a better understanding of the patchwork process be used to improve equity in human relationships?
- What inspires men to start quilting, and what keeps them interested? How would male quilters describe the changes in themselves since they began? What are social responses and how do they react? What is the nature of the relationships between male and female quilters?

Because it was based on women's own experiences, a quilt methodology validated and empowered participants. It was positive and affirming rather than prescriptive, encompassed the complexities of life, and involved multi-sensory and intuitive knowing. Quilt-like research incorporated holistic female knowing such as image, language, intuition, imagination, ancient wisdom, spirit and reason. Quilting, both the topic and the approach, provides myriad possibilities.

Appendix A

Peggy Boss Mann B.Sc., B. Ed.
Graduate student,
Department of Human Ecology, University of Alberta

13 November, 2000

Dear quilter,

This is a request for you to participate in my research. The first page explains about my research, and the second page is a consent form. Please email or phone me if you have any questions or comments. If you are willing to participate in this study, please read the information and sign the consent form. I must have your free and informed consent before the study begins.

Recently North America has experienced a resurgence of quiltmaking. This art has affected many women, their families and friends, and the economy. The growth of quilting suggests that there are important reasons why so many women are involved. Why are quilters passionate about this art? What do women learn from the process of making quilts and from other quilters? The purpose of my study is to investigate the relationship between quilters and the way they know the world.

This study has two main parts: individual interviews and videotaping of three regular meetings. The videotaped interviews will take place in a mutually agreed upon time and location. During part two, three regular meetings will be videotaped. We want you to bring your projects and work as usual. We want to learn about your personal quiltmaking history and see some of your work. Before the study is over, we will have a final interview to get closure.

The personal interview component will take 1 or 2 hours. The time and place will be agreed upon before the event. We will then videotape 3 quilt meetings. Since each session takes about 3 to 4 hours, the meeting component will require up to 12 hours. Your total time investment will be between 13 and 14 hours. You will be free to withdraw from the study at any time, no questions asked. If you withdraw, your decision will be confidential. You may attend the meetings, and no one will be told that you have opted out.

The results of this study may be published or presented to interested parties or both. Your first name, the video and photos may be used. You may use a pseudonym or include your last name if you wish. Anything discussed in confidence during the personal interview will kept in confidence. Stories and examples may be used but identities will not be revealed.

You will be invited to attend the first presentation that will likely take place in the department of Human Ecology. In honour of your participation a donation will be made to the Department of Human Ecology's Edmonton Quilters Guild scholarship endowment fund.

Sincerely,
Peggy Mann

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF RESEARCH:

Fabric-ating Meaning: Quilting as Knowing

INVESTIGATORS:

Anne Lambert	488-0098
Peggy Mann,	464-5988
Elizabeth Richards	492-9082

ANTICIPATED DATE OF COMMENCEMENT:

February 2001

INFORMATION SHEET:

Thank you for deciding to participate in this research. We know that quilting has become very popular. The main reason why we are doing this research is because we need to understand the quilting phenomenon.

We expect to learn what inspires the quilters in "The Bee". Why do you quilt? For whom do you quilt? What do you learn about yourselves, family, friends and the world because of quilting? How does quilting affect your life? What are your quiltmaking experiences?

The results of this study might help us understand how women work individually and as a group. We may also learn why quilting has become so important to us. It is our hope that by participating in this research you might also learn more about yourself and each other.

The study will be divided into two, possibly three, parts. First, you will be interviewed and videotaped so we can look at some of your quilts and talk about them. Together we will decide when and where the interview will take place. This visit will take about 1 hour. Secondly, you will be videotaped during 3 regularly scheduled group meetings. Videotaping will be used for several reasons: to accurately record stories, non-verbal communication, group dynamics and to see the projects you are working on. There is a possibility that we will have a follow up interview. We may need to clarify some statements, and you may have some questions or comments.

We want your quilt meetings to be as normal as possible. We may need to ask you some questions throughout the study to make sure we understood what you said or to clarify any comments you made. You will be phoned if that is necessary.

You will be able to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If you decide to withdraw please speak to any of the investigators. You will be welcome to attend your quilt meetings, but any reference to you - such as videotape or comments - will not be used for the analysis. No one else in the group will be told that you have opted out; this information will be kept confidential.

You are invited to attend the first presentation of the research that will take place in the Department of Human Ecology. Details will follow. Your participation in this study will be acknowledged by a donation to the Edmonton Quilters Guild Scholarship Endowment fund.

Signing this consent form indicates that you are willing to participate in the study mentioned above. Thank you for your interest and cooperation.

I AGREE TO BE A PARTICIPANT IN THE STUDY MENTIONED ABOVE. I UNDERSTAND THAT I WILL BE INTERVIEWED AND VIDEOTAPED. I GIVE PERMISSION FOR MY FIRST NAME AND LIKENESS TO BE USED. I UNDERSTAND THAT I MAY WITHDRAW AT ANY TIME WITHOUT PENALTY. I UNDERSTAND THAT I WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO REJECT ANY PART OF THE VIDEO, AUDIO OR WRITTEN ANALYSIS THAT PERTAINS TO ME AT THE END OF THE STUDY.

Name – please print: ____

Signature: ____

Witness – please print: ____

Witness – signature: ____

Date: ____

Appendix B

Permission to use Cathy Miller's Music

Subject: Re: Permission
Date: Wed, 21 Mar 2001 10:47:44 -0800
From: John Bunge & Cathy Miller bungmil@attglobal.net
To: Peggy Mann <pmann@ualberta.ca>
References: <3.0.1.32.20010320102128.006a0228@pop.srv.ualberta.ca>

Dear Peggy:
Greetings from Melbourne, Australia! We're currently on a nine-week tour of quilting guilds here, and since you know the CD, you can imagine how well it's going. There are four songs of particular interest to Australian quilters, and they are very excited about the project.

I am delighted to give you permission to use my music for your research and to play as background for presentations. Would it be possible for you to send a copy of your thesis once it's finished to me, for my reference too? I'd appreciate it, if you can. My address is: 1464 Cranbrook Place, Victoria, BC V8P 1Z7.

Would you note a change in the lyrics to "Time Flies", which slipped by me in the writing. It should read "Two thousand PEOPLE sent there", in the first verse instead of "women" - the error was drawn to my attention by Margaret Rolfe, whose research helped me to write the song.
Best of luck with it all!
cheers,
cathy

Peggy Mann wrote:

> Hi Cathy,

> I would like permission to use the music and lyrics of your CD "One Stitch
> at a Time" for my quilt research. They would make a valuable contribution
> to my work and enhance the final project. I will likely use the music as
> background for presentations and the lyrics in the written thesis, papers
> and presentations. The information would be properly referenced according
> to the requirements of the University.

> Thank you for considering my request. By-the-way, I listen to the CD often
> and enjoy the songs immensely. I look forward to hearing from you!

> Peggy

Appendix C

Technical Recording Equipment

Activity	Equipment
Individual interviews	- Optimus CTR-115, voice activated cassette tape recorder
	- Samsung 90 Studio quality cassettes
	- Optimus Omnidirectional Boundary microphone
	- Digital camera - Pentax
	- Fuji film recordable CD's – for digital images – 3 total
	- Software for image manipulation
	- Iomega Zip drive
	- Zip disks – 3 total
Group quilt sessions	- All of the above, plus:
	- Digital video tape recorder plus tripod - borrowed from Department of Human Ecology
	- Maxell XR-Metal digital tapes – 10
	- Handheld 8mm video recorder
	- Fuji pro P6-120 premium high grade 8mm cassettes
	- Memorex VHS high grade 4.5 hour video cassettes (One tape held one group quilt session. Used 3.)

References

Agostinone-Wilson, F., & Hawke, N. (2001). Quilting as a Performative Art: An Event of Irregular Proportions. Journal of Curriculum Theorizing, 17(2), 147-162.

Anderson, J. M. (1989). The Phenomenological Perspective. J. M. Morse (Ed.), Qualitative Nursing Research: A Contemporary Dialogue (pp. 15-25). Rockville, MD: Aspen.

Arnheim, R. (1974). Art and Visual Perception: A Psychology of the Creative Eye. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Arnheim, R. (1989). Thoughts on Art Education. Los Angeles: The Getty Center for Education in the Arts.

Atwood, M. (1996). Alias Grace. Toronto: Seal Books.

Bacon, L. (1953). American Patchwork Quilts. New York: Morrow.

Barber, E. W. (1994). Women's Work: The First 20,000 Years. New York: W.W.Norton & Company Inc.

Barber, E., Chandler, S., & Collins, E. C. (2001). Using Monet to Teach Leadership: Integrating the Arts into Educational Administration Preparation. Journal of Curriculum Theorizing, 17(2), 27-38.

Barone, T. E. (1990). Using the Narrative Text as an Occasion for Conspiracy. In E. Eisner, & A. Peshkin (Eds.), Qualitative Inquiry in Education (pp. 305-326). New York: Teachers College Press.

Bateson, M. C. (1990). Composing a Life. New York: Plume.

Belenky, M. F., Clinchy, B. M., Goldberger, N. R., & Tarule, J. M. (1986). Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind . New York: Basic Books.

Belenky, M. F. (1996). Public Homeplaces: Nurturing the Development of People, Families, and Communities. In N. Goldberger, J. Tarule, B. Clinchy, & M. Belenky (Eds), Knowledge, Difference, and Power: Essays Inspired by Women's Way of Knowing (pp. 393-430). New York: Basic Books.

Berger, P. L., & Luckman, T. (1966). The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge (pp. 19-46). Doubleday.

Bing, V., & Reid, P. T. (1996). Unknown Women and Unknowing Research: Consequences of Color and Class in Feminist Psychology. In N. Goldberger, J. Tarule, B. Clinchy, & M. Belenky (Eds.), Knowledge, Difference, and

Power: Essays Inspired by Women's Way of Knowing (pp. 175-202). New York: Basic Books.

Bishop, R., Bresenhan, K. P., & Leman, B. (1987). Hands all Around: Quilts from Many Nations . New York: E. P. Dutton.

Borden, R. J. (Ed.) (1986). Human Ecology: A Gathering of Perspectives. College Park: Society for Human Ecology

Borysenko, J. (1988). Minding the Body, Mending the Mind. New York: Bantam New Age Books.

Boss, A. G. (2000) DATE? TITLE? Updrafts. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

Boss, P. G., Doherty, W. J., LaRossa, R., Schumm, W. R., & Steinmetz, S. K. (Eds.). (1993). Sourcebook of Family Theories and Methods: A Contextual Approach. New York: Plenum Press.

Boss Mann, P. & Lambert, A. (2002). Art Based Research on Health and Wellbeing: A Virtual Quilt. International Institute of Qualitative Methodology. Presented at the 8th Annual Qualitative Health Research Conference, April 4 – 6, 2002, Banff, Canada.

Branch, J. (2001). A Picture Says a Thousand Words: The Collage Method in Qualitative Research. International Institute of Qualitative Methodology. Presented at the Second Advances in Qualitative Methods Conference, Edmonton, Canada.

Brodsky, J. (1997). Women, Art and Pedagogy: 1972-1992. [Online] Available. http//www.wilpaterson.edu/wpcpages/icip/njp/wap.htm.

Brussat, F., & Brussat, M. A. (1998). Spiritual Literacy: Reading the Sacred in Everyday Life. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Bubolz, M. M., & Sontag, M. S. (1993). Human Ecology Theory. P. G. Boss, W. J. Doherty, R. LaRossa, W. R. Schumm, & S. K. Steinmetz (Eds.), Sourcebook of Family Theories and Methods: A Contextual Approach (pp. 419-447). New York: Plenum Press.

Cadillac, L. (2000, October). Putting Your Skills Together. The Artist's Magazine, 78-83.

Capacchione, L. (1989). The Creative Journal: The Art of Finding Yourself. North Hollywood, CA: Newcastle Publishing Co.

Carow, B. (1997). Art Quilt Makers and their Critique Groups. Uncoverings, 18, 39-65.

Cerny, C. A., Eicher, & DeLong, M. R. (1993). Quiltmaking and the Modern Guild: A Cultural Idiom. Clothing and Textiles Research Journal, 12(1), 16-25.

Chicago, J. (1979). The Dinner Party: A Symbol of Our Heritage. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday.

Chopra, D. (2000). Perfect Health: The Complete Mind Body Guide. New York: Three Rivers Press.

Christ, C. (1980). Diving Deep and Surfacing: Women Writers on Spiritual Quest. Boston: Beacon Press.

Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (1994). Personal Experience Methods. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of Qualitative Research (pp. 413-427). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Clinchy, B. (1996). Connected and Separate Knowing: Towards a Marriage of Two Minds. N. Goldberger, J. Tarule, B. Clinchy, & M. Belenky (Eds.), Knowledge, Difference, and Power: Essays Inspired by Women's Way of Knowing (pp. 205-247). New York: Basic Books.

Colvin, J. (1996). The Nature of Design: A Quilt Artist's Personal Journal. Bothell, WA: Fiber Studio Press.

Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1990). Stories of Experience and Narrative Inquiry. Educational Researcher, 19(5), 2-14.

Conroy, M. (1976). 300 Years of Canada's quilts. Toronto: Griffin House.

Cooper, P., & Buferd, N. B. (1978). The Quilters: Women and Domestic Art - An Oral History. New York: Doubleday.

Croce, B. (1966). Art as expression. E. W. Eisner, & D. W. Ecker (Eds.), Readings in Art Education (pp. 31-42). Waltham: Blaisdell.

Cross, M. B. (1996). Quilts & Women of the Mormon Migrations: Treasures of Transition. Nashville: Rutledge Hill Press.

Crowe, R. (2001). Encountering Angels through Arful Inquiry: Lost Bodies and Wild Imagination. Journal of Curriculum Theorizing, 17(2), 81-94.

Csikszentmihaly, M. (1991). Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience. New York: HarperPerennial.

Csikszentmihaly, M., & Rochberg-Halton, E. (1981-1998). The Meaning of Things: Domestic Symbols and the Self. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Daly, M. (1978). Gyn/ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism. Boston:

Beacon Press.

Deacon, S. A. (2000). Creativity within Qualitative Research on Families: New Ideas for Old Methods. The Qualitative Report, 4(3).

DeJonge, J. (no date). A Human Ecological Philosophy for Environmental Design. (pp. 185-189). Society for Human Ecology.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (1994). Handbook of Qualitative Research . Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Introduction: Entering the Field of Qualitative Research. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of Qualitative Research (pp. 1-17). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1998). Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Dewey, J. (1958, c1934). Art as Experience . New York: Capricorn Books.

Dewey, J. (1938). Experience & Education. New York: Collier MacMillan.

DiRezze, G., & Mantas, K. (2001). Masquerade: (Un)ma(s)king Ourselves through Arts-based Narratives. Journal of Curriculum Theorizing, 17(2), 129-142.

Dobson, J. (1997). Patchwork Quilting and Applique: The Complete Guide to all the Essential Techniques. Pleasantville, NY: Reader's Digest.

Donmoyer, R., & Yennie-Donmoyer, J. (1995). Data as Drama: Reflections on the Use of Readers Theater as a Mode of Qualitative Data Display. Qualitative Inquiry, 1(4).

Donnell, R. (1990). Quilts as Women's Art: A Quilt Poetics. Vancouver: Gallerie Publications.

Douglass, B., & Moustakas, C. (1985). Heuristic Inquiry: The Internal Search to Know. Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 25(3), 39-55.

Gage Canadian Dictionary (1983). Toronto: Gage.

Duffy, M. (1995). Sensemaking: A Collaborative Inquiry Approach to 'Doing' Learning. The Qualitative Report, 2(2). [On-line] http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR2-2/duffy.html

Ecker, D. W. (1963). The Artistic Process as Qualitative Problem Solving. The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, XXI(3).

Edwards, B. (1986). Drawing on the Artist Within: An Inspirational and Practical

Guide to Increasing Your Creative Powers . New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc.

Eisler, R. (1995). The Chalice and the Blade: Our History, Our Future . New York: HarperCollins.

Eisner, E. (1997). Abilities Honed by an Arts Education. Christian Science Monitor, 89(45).

Eisner, E. (1985). Aesthetic Modes of Knowing. In E. Eisner (Ed), Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education: 84. Learning and teaching the ways of knowing. Part II. (pp. 23-36). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Eisner, E. (1999). Does Experience in the Arts Boost Academic Achievement? Clearing House, 72(3), 143-150.

Eisner, E. (1991a). The Enlightened Eye: Qualitative Inquiry and the Enhancement of Educational Practice. New York: Macmillan.

Eisner, E. (1993). Forms of Understanding and the Future of Educational Research. Educational Researcher, 22(7), 5-11.

Eisner, E. (1992). The Misunderstood Role of the Arts in Human Development. Phi Delta Kappan, 73(8), 591-595.

Eisner, E. (1997). The New Frontier in *Qualitative* Research Methodology. Qualitative Inquiry, 3(3), 259-274.

Eisner, E. (1995). The Power of Images in Education. Educational Leadership, 53(2).

Eisner, E. (1995). Standard for American Schools: Help or Hindrance? Phi Delta Kappan, 76(10), 758-764.

Eisner, E. (1999). The Uses and Limits of Performance Assessment. Phi Delta Kappan, 80(9), 658-661.

Eisner, E. (1991b). What the Arts Taught Me About Education. In G. Willis, & Schubert W. (Eds), Reflections From the Heart of Educational Inquiry (pp. 34-48). Albany: State University of New York Press.

Eisner, E. W. (1997). The Promise and Perils of Alternative Forms of Data Representation. Educational Researcher, 26(6), 4-10.

Estes, C. P. (1997). Women Who Run With the Wolves: Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype. New York: Ballantine Books.

Ferrero, P., Hedges, E., & Silber, J. (1987). Hearts and Hands: The Influence of Women & Quilts on American Society. San Francisco: The Quilt Digest

Press.

Finley, S. (2001). Painting Life Histories. Journal of Curriculum Theorizing, 17(2), 13-26.

Finley, S., & Knowles, J. G. (1995). Researcher as Artist/Artist as Researcher. Qualitative Inquiry, 1(1), 110-143.

Fons, M., & Porter, L. (1993). Quilter's Complete Guide. Birmingham, AL: Oxmoor House Inc.

Frankl, V. E. (1985). Man's Search for Meaning . New York: Simon & Schuster.

Gigerenzer, G., Todd, P. M., & ABC Research Group Staff. (1999). Simple Heuristics that Make us Smart. Oxford University Press.

Gilligan, C. (1998). In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development . Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Gilligan, C., Rogers, A. G., & Tolman, D. L. (Eds.). (1991). Women, Girls & Psychotherapy: Reframing Resistance . New York: The Haworth Press.

Glenbow-Alberta Institute. (1988) From Mother's piece-bag. (Vol. 8(2), 4-6.) [Brochure]. Calgary, Canada. Kerkhoven, M.

Goldberger, N., Tarule, J., Clinchy, B., & Belenky, M. (Eds.). (1996). Knowledge, Difference, and Power: Essays Inspired by Women's Way of Knowing . New York: Basic Books.

Hafen, B. Q., Karren, K. J., Frandsen, K. J., & Smith, N. L. (Eds.). (1996). Mind/Body Health: The Effects of Attitudes, Emotions, and Relationships . Needham Heights MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Hall, C. A., & Kretsinger, R. G. (1991). The Romance of the Patchwork Quilt. New York: Dover.

Hamilton, D. (1994). Traditions, Preferences, and Postures in Applied Qualitative Research. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of Qualitative Research (pp. 60-69). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Hammond, S. T. (1994). Designing Quilts: The Value of Value. Bothell, WA: The Patchwork Place.

Heath, A. W. (1997). The Proposal in Qualitative Research. The Qualitative Report, 3(1).

Heber, L. (2001). Reflective Art for the Creative Self. Paper presented at the Second Advances in Qualitative Methods Conference for the International Institute for Qualitative Methodology, Edmonton, Canada.

Heilbrun, C. (1989). Writing a woman's life. New York: Ballantine Books.

Henderson, Z. P. (1995). Renewing our Social Fabric. Human Ecology Forum, 23(1), 16-18.

Hens, L., & Devuyst, D. (1994). Human Ecology: The European Perspective. Human Ecology Review, Summer/Autumn(1), 326-334.

Heyn, D. (1997). Marriage Shock: The Transformation of Women into Wives. New York: Villard Books.

Holdgrafer, M. S., & Huntington, W. (2001). Healing Stitches: How Your Art Imitates your Life. Unpublished manuscript.

Holstein, J. A., & Gubruim, J. F. (1998). Phenomenology, Ethnomethodology, and Interpretive Practice. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds), Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry (pp. 137-157). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Huberman, A. M., & Miles, M. B. (1994). Data Management and Analysis Methods. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of Qualitative Research (pp. 428-444). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Hunt, G. P. (1996). Quiltworks Across Canada: Eleven Contemporary Workshops. North Vancouver: Pacific Quiltworks Ltd.

Irwin, R. L. (1999). Listening to the Shapes of Collaborative Artmaking. Art Education, March, 35-40.

Irwin, R. L., Stephenson, W., Robertson, H., Neale, A., Mastri, R., & Crawford, N. (1998). Quiltmaking as a Metaphor: Creating a Feminist Political Consciousness for Art Pedagogues. E. J. Sacca, & E. Zimmerman (Eds.), Women Art Educators IV: Herstories, Ourstories, Future Stories. Boucherville: Canadian Society for Education Through Art.

Jagodzinski, J. (1992). Curriculum as Felt Through Six Layers of an Aesthetically Embodied Skin: The Archwriting on the Body. In W. Pinar, & W. Reynolds (Eds), Understanding Curriculum as Phenomenological and Deconstructed Text (pp. 159-183). New York: Teachers College Press.

Johannah, B. (1993). Crystal Piecing . Radnor, PA: Chilton Book Company.

Jungen, B. (no date). Integration of Knowledge in Human Ecology. Society for Human Ecology.

Katahan, E. A. (1997). Stories of an Immigrant Greek Woman: My Mother's Dowry Textiles. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada.

Katz, G. (2001). Art as a Way of Knowledge. Paper presented at the Second Advances in Qualitative Methods Conference for the International Institute for Qualitative Methodology, Edmonton, Canada.

Langer, S. (1953). Philosophy in a New Key. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Laughlin, M. J. (1995). The Narcissistic Researcher: A Personal View. The Qualitative Report, 2(2), 4. [On-line] http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR2-2/laughlin.html

Lawrence-Lightfoot, S., & Davis, J. H. (1997). The Art and Science of Portraiture. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Lipman, M. (1967). What Happens in Art? New York: Meredith Publishing Company.

Lipsett, L. O. (1985). Remember Me: Women & Their Friendship Quilts. San Francisco: The Quilt Digest Press.

Maher, F. A., & Tetreault, M. K. (1996). Women's Ways of Knowing in Women's Studies, Feminist Pedagogies, and Feminist Theory. N. Goldberger, J. Tarule, B. Clinchy, & M. Belenky (Eds.), Knowledge, Difference, and Power: Essays Inspired by Women's Way of Knowing (pp. 148-174). New York: Basic Books.

Mahoney, M. J. (1996). Connected Knowing in Constructive Psychotherapy. N. Goldberger, J. Tarule, B. Clinchy, & M. Belenky (Eds.), Knowledge, Difference, and Power: Essays Inspired by Women's Ways of Knowing (pp. 126-147). New York: Basic Books.

Manifold, M. C. (1998). Art rituals of women: Three Cases of Grief-work Art Making. In E. J. Sacca, & E. Zimmerman (Eds.), Women Art Educators IV: Herstories, Ourstories, Future Stories. Boucherville: Canadian Society for Education Through Art.

McCracken, G. (1986). Culture and consumption: A Theoretical Account of the Structure and Movement of the Cultural Meaning of Consumer Goods. Journal of Consumer Research, 13, 71-84.

McLeod, J. (1987). The Arts and Education. Keynote address given at an invitational seminar co-sponsored by the Fine Arts Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association and the University of Alberta Faculty of Education. Edmonton, Alberta.

McNiff, S. (1998). Art-based Research . London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers Ltd.

Miller, C. (2000). One Stitch at a Time. [CD]. Victoria, BC: Sealed with a Kiss Records.

Miller, M. J. (1992). Strips that Sizzle. Bothell, WA: That Patchwork Place, Inc.

Morse, J. M. (Ed.). (1994). Critical Issues in Qualitative Research Methods . Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Morse, J. M. (1998). Designing Funded Qualitative Research. N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), Strategies of Qualitative Research (pp. 56-85). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Morse, J. M., & Field, P. A. (1995). Qualitative Research Methods for Health Professionals. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Moustakas, C. (1990). Heuristic Research: Design, Methodology, and Applications. Newbury Park: Sage.

Mullen, C. A., & Diamond, C. T. (Eds.). (2001). Journal of Curriculum Theorizing (Vols. 17). San Francisco, California: Caddo Gap Press.

Munhall, P. (1995). The Pretending "I": Women's Secrets and Silences. P. Munhall (Ed), In Women's Experience: Volume II (pp. 185-209). New York: National League for Nursing Press.

Munhall, P. L. (Ed). (1995). In Women's Experience: Volume II. New York: National League for Nursing Press.

Nachmanovitch, S. (1990). Free Play: Improvisation in Life and Art. New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam.

Norris, J. (2000). Drama as Research: Realizing the Potential of Drama in Education as a Research Methodology. Youth Theatre Journal, 14, 40-51.

Norris, J. (1999). Issues in Arts Based Educational Research. Paper presented at the meeting of the International Institute for Qualitative Methodology, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada.

Norris, J. (1989). A View from Inside the Carriage: Ethnographic Video as a Methodology. A paper presented at the International Drama Education Research Symposium, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Toronto, Ontario.

Norris, J. (2001). What Can We Do? A Performance Workshop on Bullying and Managing Anger. Journal of Curriculum Theorizing, 17(2), 111-128.

Norris, J., Guercio, G., & Berry, G. (1999). Collage Creation as Meaning Making. Presented at the International Institute of Qualitative Methodology

Conference Program: Advances in Qualitative Methods, Edmonton, Canada.

Norris, J., & Mirror theatre. (2000). Faces of Prejudice: A Video on Prejudice. Alberta Teachers' Association and Lions Club International (Producers), Edmonton, Canada.

Norris, J., & Mirror Theatre. (2000). What Can We Do?: A Video on Bullying and Managing Anger. Alberta Teachers' Association and Lions Club International (Producers), Edmonton, Canada.

Norris, J. R. (1997). Meaning Through Form: Alternative Modes of Knowledge Representation. J. Morse (Ed), Completing a Qualitative Project: Details and Dialogue (pp. 87-115). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Northrup, C. (1998). Women's Bodies, Women's Wisdom: Creating Physical and Emotional Health and Healing. New York: Bantam Books.

Norton, A. (2000). One Quilt, One Moment: Quilts that Change Lives. Golden, CO: Primedia Consumer Magazine & Internet Group .

Osmond, M. W., & Thorne, B. (1993). Feminist Theories: The Social Construction of Gender in Families and Society. In P. G. Boss, W. J. Doherty, R. LaRossa, W. R. Schumm, & S. K. Steinmetz (Eds.), Sourcebook of Family Theories and Methods: A Contextual Approach (pp. 591-623). New York: Plenum Press.

Otto, W. (1991). How to Make an American Quilt. New York: Ballantine Books.

Parker, R. (1989). The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine. New York: Routledge.

Patenaude, J. (1992). The Quilted Image: Aesthetic Choices and Artistic Temperament. Patchwords, 1, 9-24.

Patterson, D. (1999). Inquiry as Metaphorical Sensing. Paper presented at Advances in Qualitative Methods, International Institute of Qualitative Methodology Conference, Edmonton, Canada.

Pert, C. B. (1999). Molecules of Emotion: Why You Feel the Way You Feel. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Polansky, K. (1999). A Phenomenological Feminist Study: Putting the Pieces Together. Presented at the Advances in Qualitative Methods, International Institute of Qualitative Methodology Conference Program, Edmonton, Canada.

Polanyi, M. (1966). The Tacit Dimension. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Pratt, J. (no date). "Ecology of Knowing": A Brief Conceptual Statement. Society for

Human Ecology, 94-103.

Punch, M. (1994). Politics and Ethics in Qualitative Research. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of Qualitative Research (pp. 83-98). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Reed, C. (Ed.). (1996). Not at Home: The Suppression of Domesticity in Modern Art and Architecture . New York: Thames and Hudson Ltd.

Richards, E., Martin-Scott, S., & Maguire, K. (1991). Quilts as Material History: Identifying Research Models. Uncoverings, 11, 149-164.

Richards, R. (2000). Fat qQuarter Friendly: From Fons and Porter for the Love of Quilting. Birmingham, Alabama: Oxmoor House Inc.

Ruddick, S. (1996). Reason's "Femininity": A Case for Connected Knowing. N. Goldberger, J. Tarule, B. Clinchy, & M. Belenky (Eds), Knowledge, Difference, and Power: Essays Inspired by Women's Way of Knowing (pp. 248-273). New York: Basic Books.

Rudestam, K. E., & Newton, R. R. (1992). Surviving Your Dissertation: A Comprehensive Guide to Content and Process. Newbury Park: Sage.

Sacca, E. J., & Zimmerman, E. (Eds.). (1998). Women Art Educators IV: Herstories, Ourstories, Future Stories. Boucherville: Canadian Society for Education Through Art.

Schulz, M. L. (1998). Awakening Intuition: Using Your Mind-Body Network for Insight and Healing. New York: Three Rivers Press.

Segal, B. (1990). Peace, Love and Healing. New York: Harperperennial Library.

Shaw, R. (1997). The Art Quilt. China: Hugh Lauter Levin Associates Inc.

Solomon, A. M. (1997). Seasons of the Soul: The Wheel of the Year in Quilts. Winmalee New South Wales, Australia: Pentacle Press.

Solomon, A. M. (1997). WHATEVER THE TITLE IS. Unpublished master's thesis, University of WHATEVER, CITY, NSW, Australia.

Sommers, R. C. (1997). The quilting bee: A research metaphor. The Qualitative Report 3(4), 3. [On-line] http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR3-4/sommers.html

Sontag, M. S., & Bubolz, M. M. A Human Ecological Perspective for Integration in Home Economics. Human Ecology: Research and Applications (pp. 117-127).

Steward, J. S. (Compiled by). (1994). .Quilting: Quotations Celebrating an American

Legacy . Philadelphia: Running Press Book Publishers.

Straus, D. B. Human Ecology: The specialty of generalizing.

Strauss, A. (1995). Notes on the Nature and Development of General Theories. Qualitative Inquiry, 1(1), 7-18.

Tannen, D. (1990). You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation . New York: Ballantine.

Taylor, C. (no date). Response to "Ecology of Knowing". Society for Human Ecology, 104-108.

Tedford, S. (1999). An Exercise in Creativity: Taking Collective Discussion Further. Presented at the Advances in Qualitative Methods Conference, International Institute of Qualitative Methodology, Edmonton, Canada.

The Alliance for American Quilts. (2000) Quilters' S.O.S. - Save Our Stories Project [On-line]. Available www.2.h-net.msu.edu/-quilt.

Thurber, F. (1998). Exploring Women's Issues in Art: A Journey Through Boundaries of Center and Margin. E. &. Z. E. Sacca (Eds.), Women Art Educators IV: Herstories, Ourstories, Future Stories. Boucherville: Canadian Society for Education Through Art.

Tobin, J. L., & Dobard, R. G. (1999). Hidden in Plain View: A Secret Story of Quilts and the Underground Railroad. New York: Doubleday.

Tobin, S. (1996). Cherished Possessions: The Meaning of Things. Generations, (Fall), 46-48.

Tochon, F. V. (2000). Action Poetry as an Empowering Art: A Manifesto for Didaction in Arts Education. International Journal of Education & the Arts, 1(2).

Truesdale, C. (1999). Threaded Together. Presented at the Advances in Qualitative Methods Conference International Institute of Qualitative Methodology, Edmonton, Canada.

Tyson, K. B. (1994). New Foundations for Scientific Social and Behavioral Research: The Heuristic Paradigm. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon Inc.

Underwood, I. (1994). The Women's Institute and Quilt Research. Patchwords, 2, 71-88.

Van Manen, M. (1990). Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy. London, Ont.: The State University of New York.

Visvader, J. (1986). Philosophy and Human Ecology. R. J. Borden (Ed.), Human Ecology: A Gathering of Perspectives (pp. 117-127). College Park, MD: Society for Human Ecology.

Von Gwinner, S. (1988). The History of the Patchwork Quilt: Origins, Traditions and Symbols of a Textile Art. Westchester: Schiffer Publishing Limited.

Wainwright, L. (1996). Robert Rauschenberg's Fabrics: Reconstructing Domestic Space. In C. Reed (Ed.), Not at Home: The Suppression of Domesticity in Modern Art and Architecture (pp. 193-205). New York: Thames and Hudson Ltd.

Walker, M. I. (1992). Ontario's Heritage Quilts. Toronto: Stoddart Publishing Co. Limited.

Webb, A. (1992). Twelve Golden Threads: Lessons for Successful Living from Grama's Quilt . New York: HarperCollins.

Weizman, S. M., & Eliot-Los, E. (1984). Alberta Quilts. Edmonton: Alberta Art Foundation.

Westney, O. E. (1993). Human Ecology Theory: Implications for Education, Research, and Practice. In P. G. Boss, W. J. Doherty, R. LaRossa, W. R. Schumm, & S. K. Steinmetz (Eds.), Sourcebook of Family Theories and Methods: A Contextual Approach (pp. 448-450). New York: Plenum Press.

Westney, O. E., Brabble, E. W., & Edwards, C. H. (1988). Human Ecology: Concepts and Perspectives. R. J. Borden, & J. Jacobs (Eds.), Human Ecology: Research and Applications (pp. 129-137). College Park, MD: Society for Human Ecology.

Willing, K. B., & Dock, J. B. (1994). Quilting Now & Then. Ashland: Now & Then Publications.

Witmer, J. M. a. S. T. J. (1992). A Holistic Model for Wellness and Prevention Over the Life Span. Journal of Counseling & Development, 71(November/December), 140-148.

Woods, M. L. (1995). The Canadian Quilters Association/Association Canadienne de la Courtepointe: A Sociologist Looks at an Old Craft in Contemporary Canadian Life. Patchwords, 1-2, 39-50.

Woyshner, C. A., & Gelfond, H. S. (Eds.). (1998). Minding Women: Reshaping the Educational Realm . Cambridge MA: Harvard Educational Review.